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Where angels fear to tread: the development of leadership capacity through simulation-based learning

Tracey T. McDonald
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WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD:

The development of leadership capacity
through simulation-based learning

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
requirements for the award of**

Doctor of Philosophy

from

The University of Wollongong

by

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RN, CM, DNEd, BHA, MSc(Hons)

**Faculty of Education
2003**

ABSTRACT

The effects of a critical learning experience were journalled by 218 students in a bachelor of nursing program from 1993 to 1999. The learning experience in their final year of study was a simulation laced with political and personal challenges to mimic pressures found in contemporary health industry environments where nurses practice. Conceived through a framework of developmental theory and processes, this teaching and learning approach endorses attributes of courage, daring and strategic action as part of the nursing role. Students were able to experience the effects of a competitive, professional environment where principles of community development were incorporated into the content, learning and assessment methods to promote development of an image of themselves as competent, professional people. The result is a cohort of graduate nurses who have emerged from their studies aware of political, bureaucratic and personal factors that establish and preserve credible leaders in the health system. Most who experienced the simulation claim to have gained sufficient self-confidence to have input into decisions that affect their personal and professional goals.

Incorporating such a large amount of data required an analytical approach consisting of multiple levels of configuring and re-configuring the narrative contained in student journals. An initial macro analysis of all data was achieved through conceptual mapping that traced the various pathways students took as they moved through individual learning challenges. Further macro analysis involved clustering journal data into major themes and, from there, particular themes elucidated the effects of the learning experience. Further analysis focused on understanding how students perceived the bureaucratic, political and personal aspects of leadership experiences leading to the formation of particular positions about learning, leadership and group work. At the micro level, certain students' journals were more closely examined in terms of values and emotions experienced in the simulation and to ensure that a range of voices are heard, including my own reflective and reflexive contribution to the learning and research process, regarding the value of the learning experience.

Analysis of the student journals reveals that leadership can be learned at the undergraduate level in a way that can have a personally transforming effect. These undergraduate students of nursing learned many political, bureaucratic and personal skills that will equip them to become competent leaders as well as proficient clinicians, within the health system.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.



.....
Tracey, T. A. McDonald (née Burton)

15 October 2003

DEDICATION

For my mother, Pearl Elizabeth Burton née Toole, who never for one moment doubted that there was anything her daughter could not accomplish.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several decades of my career in nursing have been devoted to teaching and I have been privileged along the way to meet scores of lively, intelligent and compassionate people who have studied to become nurses. I therefore acknowledge the special group of students who helped me to develop as a teacher and researcher by generously sharing with me their thoughts on leadership, management and professional development. Without them this research would not have been possible.

The unstinting support and understanding of my supervisor, Jan Wright, needs also to be acknowledged. Throughout my many career transitions and professional adventures, Jan managed to help me focus on the research. In challenging to me to be more rigorous and less polemic, she helped me to discover much about myself and the various worlds in which I travel. Because of her wisdom and guidance my experiences of postgraduate teaching and supervision has been both enjoyable and rewarding.

My sons Duncan and Iain have always encouraged me in my pursuit of knowledge and their understanding in allowing me time to work on this PhD is sincerely appreciated. Duncan in particular has supplied me with inspiration and confidence needed during those long days of analysis and writing, and I am continually warmed by the obvious pride he takes in my achievements.

I also wish to acknowledge colleagues in various organisations in which I worked during the development of this project. Special thanks is due to colleagues at the University of Wollongong where the simulation-based learning strategy was developed. My understanding of the context from which this thesis has emerged has been further extended through working at Monash University, the Nurses' Association and the Australian Nursing Homes and Extended Care Association.

The challenge in this research, of taking the theoretical notions of teaching and applying them in the practical world, has been an amazing experience and I marvel at how the person who initiated the project has transformed into the person who completed it. But that is another story.

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WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

The development of leadership capacity through simulation-based learning

Prologue

And the day came, when the risk of staying closed
in a bud became greater than the risk of blossoming.
(The Maxx)

The quote above is taken from an American Music Television (MTV) animated series presented on SBS television in Australia in the 1990s. Quoting a statement made by a cartoon character is probably a strange way to open a scholarly thesis, but when I heard these words, I was immediately propelled into critical reflection. Questions arose for me on how I had made decisions in my own life and how some of my more conservative choices may be influencing students who looked to me for leadership as well as information and skills about nursing. Whether to 'stay closed in a bud' and thereby go unnoticed or to work to achieve a 'full bloom that cannot be ignored' can be seen as a metaphor for development processes that many students experience during their university studies. With a twist of imagination, this same metaphor can be applied to the ways in which nursing has struggled to develop as a profession and an academic discipline. I have, since the early 1990's, continued to reflect on the words of 'The Maxx' which seem to admonish those who would restrict their own growth in order to avoid challenge and change. I now cannot look at a rosebud that has been cut and left to shrivel in mediocrity, without feeling sad that it has missed its opportunity to bloom.

In this thesis, the contextual forces at play around decisions related to the 'blossoming' of nursing will be canvassed in Chapter Two as a prelude to explaining how and why the teaching and research occurred. Chapter Three provides details of the critical pedagogy wherein undergraduate students of nursing had an opportunity to experience the impact of power, competition and politics on a team project and to respond in ways that promoted their personal and professional development.

The voices of the students who experienced the critical pedagogy are heard throughout the results contained in Chapter Four which looks at the development of management skills; Chapter Five deals with leadership skill development; Chapter Six with the accumulation of political skills. The data and issues raised in these three chapters are closely related to promoting development of leadership capacity among undergraduate students. For most students it was the effort made to accumulate management,

political and leadership skills that took up a considerable amount of their time while studying in this subject. Chapters Seven and Eight give voice to students who reflected on their personal gains and losses during the pedagogy. Some believed that they had experienced personal transformation during the critical pedagogy with some attributing personal growth to their struggle to move beyond mediocrity. Throughout the various chapters there is evidence that some students had difficulty with this critical mode of study which seemed to them to be asking for more time and energy than they were prepared to invest.

The research reported in this thesis is most suitably located within the sphere of education research as part of the field of critical pedagogy. The students whose journals provide the narrative upon which this study is based, participated in an innovative learning environment which simulated the competitive, political and bureaucratic pressures of the health system. Each student found their own way through the various conflicts, dilemmas and demands associated with being both an individual and a group participant in a context that rewarded courage, daring and credible leadership. It is their experience of the simulation and their reflections on questions of equity, justice, responsibility, politics, systematic constraints and empowerment and the responses they made to challenges that arose within the simulation, that permits this research a position within the field of critical pedagogy research.

Although critical pedagogy, reflection and reflective practice are enduring topics within the professional education literature, the application of these ideals to practical teaching situations are less frequently reported (Grundy 1984; Giroux and McLaren 1986; McLaren 1996). Notions of applying critical pedagogy also attract some criticism regarding its use as an emancipation strategy (Buckingham 1996) although much of this criticism emerges from a position that questions adherence to any paradigm that seeks to shape the ideas of others. In the world of professional education teachers and learners become accustomed to expectations from the general community and from the profession concerned that students need to accumulate certain skills, knowledge and attributes in order to be accepted as part of the professional group. For me, finding ways to overcome the tension between these pedagogical approaches while preserving the ethics and ideals of the nursing profession was challenging, stimulating and rewarding.

Chapter 1: Context

The personal context

My own value systems, beliefs and experiences influence the way I engage with the education context and it is perhaps useful for the reader to have some information that may explain some of my decisions in relation to teaching and also this research project.

Born in the central west of New South Wales, it was not until I left home to take up nursing that I realized how protected my world had been. I began to acclimatize to the new environment of nursing and medicine, which seemed to be immersed in human misery and tragedy. Student nurses in the mid 1960s were put to work with little information and even less emotional support or guidance. Before long I began to question almost everything about the way student nurses and patients were processed by the health system. On reflection, I suspect that initially I objected to any and all systems and rules that I thought were authoritarian. Later, working in various nursing, education and management contexts, I tried to operate within 'the system' as either an early adopter of change or as 'agent provocateur' to prevent the development of oppressive rules and to prompt review of those that limited nurses' roles and career options.

My early activism within the health system informed much of my career in nursing. While I have moved between clinical, management, training, academic, trade union and private practice associated with the health industry, I have always valued what nurses are able to do for patients and their communities. At the same time, my interest and concern has been about finding ways to lift the limitations I see being placed on nurse development and scholarship over time. I have come to the view that nurses who incorporate political conscientiousness as part of clinical practice, management and education, can influence the development of the nursing profession and the way nurses evaluate their own contributions to the health and well-being of the general community

While working as an academic I realized that changes to educational approaches at the undergraduate level were needed if education were to remain useful and relevant to professional nursing. However, I could see that whatever teaching strategy I adopted, it would need to be firmly located within a professional values framework in order for students to continue to blossom, that is, to continue to develop personally and professionally once they entered the nursing workforce. As I pondered on the tensions that exist between wanting to preserve professional education frameworks while also

considering the implementation of change, I came to see that it might be possible to implement teaching and learning approaches that could foster individual courage and daring, as well as collaboration and focused team work - all of which are central tenets of the professional nursing role. So I set about finding ways to achieve this goal through innovative approaches to content sequencing as well as learning and assessment methods that might promote development of the types of individual accountability and confidence necessary to build leadership capacity.

Over two decades of higher education sector teaching experience has allowed me to observe students as they prepared for a career in nursing. During this time I could not ignore the difficulties experienced by new graduates as they adjusted to a competitive workplace environment once they began working as registered nurses. As I reflected on my observations I concluded that nursing faculties could help to prepare graduates for the non-clinical, individual roles and responsibilities that they would have to undertake as well as their clinical nursing responsibilities. Given certain opportunities during their undergraduate studies, nurses could enter the paid workforce with a repertoire of skills including political acumen that would enable them to better understand the operation of power and to be able to work effectively within the health industry.

The path I followed in reaching these personal conclusions was at times arduous and occasionally placed me at odds with faculty colleagues whose focus was more often on teaching technical skills that were desirable for graduates to attain than encouraging them to aspire to leadership. I believed that technically rational approaches to teaching failed to acknowledge the more autonomous aspects of professional nursing roles which can be developed and improved by nurses through reflection on their own practice. For me, in my role as teacher, resisting the forces of conformity and control in nursing entailed intellectual struggle and throughout the experience I reflected on what it actually means to prepare people for a professional nursing role.

The spectre of future nursing shortages contributed to my reflections and I came to believe that if graduates possessed sufficient levels of confidence and ability, frustration and feelings of disempowerment would be less likely to occur and as a result, they may choose to remain part of the nursing workforce. I realized too, that graduates would need to be capable of performing beyond the levels of discipline-specific technical competence traditionally associated with nurses if they were to be able to influence their work environment and thrive in a politicised health system. I

wondered if it might also be possible for students to glean personal benefits from critical reflection on the political, personal and professional consequences of opposition to, or compliance with, structures and systems that shape the potential of nurses and nursing.

The political context

Clearly, the teaching strategy that emerged, and this research, have political implications for the practice of nursing and nurse education. Because of this simulation-based pedagogy a cohort of nurses, who are as capable of political action as clinical efficacy, have entered the nursing workforce and their approaches to professional practice could impact on the way all stakeholders perceive the contribution nurses make to the health field.

As nurses continue to develop new political agendas for themselves and for the reformation of their profession, requirements in terms of knowledge and skill development in nursing and related fields must change. The task of leading nursing through an environment of rapid change involves challenges that can best be met by those who are directly involved in delivering, managing and teaching nursing, but only if these people in leadership positions are politically aware and capable of acting strategically to achieve their goals. Concomitantly, pedagogical research that validates the type of learning and development that prepares new graduates to understand and be part of shifts in power and control in the health industry, is also inherently political.

The political environment that prompted this simulation-based critical pedagogy and this research, emerges from an era of political turbulence and change within the Australian health industry. Success in nursing and other health professions is related to being system-wise in servicing the health care demands of communities. By 'system-wise' I mean clinically proficiency combined with political awareness and bureaucratic sophistication as well as possessing the courage, tenacity and daring to act politically. If teachers of nursing are to provide relevant educational support for nurses entering a political environment, the range of learning experiences needed to equip nurses with the skills to do well must be carefully selected. The simulation-based learning environment analysed in this research is just one example of an innovative approach that could assist in the preparation of system-wise graduates. Of course, the utility of these educational offerings will only be confirmed when graduates try to apply what they have learned within the 'real-world' of professional nursing. However the return of

the findings, in this case, to the participants was neither possible or appropriate because the analysis was conducted following the graduation of participants and their entry into the workforce. In any event, this research makes no claims beyond the particular site of the simulation, the context of which is described here in detail, thereby rendering notions of 'on site bias' mostly irrelevant. The focus of this study was to discover how the students represented what was happening in their journals rather than establishing truth or facts that can be generalised.

Industrial context

Twenty years ago, nursing was described as the 'sleeping giant in the health care delivery system' in terms of the proportion of the health workforce, the knowledge and skill base that has never been effectively harnessed to become a political force, and the fact that the vast majority of nurses are women (O'Connor, 1985). In fact, the main staffing and skill resource within the health system has always been the nursing workforce but in 2003 the size of that workforce is contracting and nursing and medical work is being procedurised and delegated to other members of the health team. As this trend continues, delineations between traditional professions such as nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, social work and medicine are becoming less clear.

The potential political force of large numbers of nurses in the health system was also commented upon by Petersen (1994) when he observed that the willingness of nurses and others to become involved in political activity is moderated by the fact they tend to identify more clients than with other professionals or their employers. Consequently he states that many nurses are resistant to radical change and reticent about being regarded as 'political'. While nurses are the largest group of health professionals and offer the widest range of health services, collective action by nurses to achieve change remains more as a last resort than during initial stages of resolving industrial problems.

Whether or not the observations made by O'Connor and Petersen on the Australian nursing workforce remain relevant in 2003 depends on how nursing leaders grapple with changes arising out of demographic change, technological innovation along with a growing industrial culture of compacting work roles and increasing productivity in a health system with contracting resources.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2000) report shows that in 1993 Australia had 281,452 registered nurses and by 1998 the number had fallen to

264,819. The Bureau of Statistics (2002) estimates the number of registered nurses in Australia in 1999 to be 212,878 which is an overall fall of 26.5%. Of these, only 167,400 (78.6%) were employed in 1999 as registered nurses. The Australian Universities Teaching Committee Final Report (2002) states that most nurses work in the acute care, public hospital system which has undergone significant increases in patient load and throughput with patients discharged from hospital between 1986 and 1996 increasing by 55.6% or from 3.3 million to 5.2 million. Concurrently, the length of time patients stay in hospital has been reduced allowing nurses less time to provide nursing services.

Educational preparation for such a workplace would require what Gottlieb and Gottlieb (1998) identify as the need for nurses to be relevant, accountable, visible, innovative, have a global impact, retain their uniqueness while functioning in multidisciplinary settings and be exceptionally competent while striving for excellence. Obviously not a small set of requirements. Research that supports such a movement in Australia has industrial implications in terms of encouraging nurses to negotiate outside established industrial agreements so that nursing practice can flourish in areas that have not been industrially proclaimed under nursing awards.

The pressures associated with working in complex technological environments but with less time to treat and care for sicker people with fewer nurses, has exacted a toll on the nursing workforce. Buchanan and Considine (2002) identified recent changes in hospital management systems as a significant part of the problem of nursing work becoming increasingly unattractive for nurses. They claim that the results of this research reflects serious problems with a nursing workforce leadership and a nursing and health management culture which has embraced a business mindset and shifted priority to cost control in the management of illness, injury and disease. As a result, nurses surveyed claim that they feel disconnected from the nursing management hierarchy, leaving them with less support and reduced control over the environments in which they are working.

The end result of the pressures generated by the situation described by Buchanan and Considine, is a situation of around six thousand nursing vacancies in the Australian public health system, at least two thousand of which are in New South Wales. Projections of estimated retirement losses of nurses in New South Wales were calculated by Pallas-O'Brien (2001) and depict a worrying trend. In her projections, assuming that as of 1999 nurses retire at age fifty-eight in New South Wales, by 2004

the vacancy rate will be 6,630 for registered nurses and 698 for enrolled nurses. By 2009 on the same calculations, there will be 12,825 registered nurse vacancies and 1,505 enrolled nurse vacancies in this State.

In a report by National 'Best Practice Australia' in May 2002 of a survey of 7,688 nurses it was claimed that 50% of these nurses were at risk of leaving the nursing profession and 41% were considering leaving their organisation. A further survey in this series where the question was asked, 'On balance, is your organisation a truly great place to work?' researchers found that the extent to which nurses increasingly feel alienated from their work colleagues, mirrors the risk of them leaving the organisation.

At the time of commencing this current research, I had anticipated future problems within the nursing workforce arising out of a loss of nursing influence over nurse education, nursing management, health policy and research. It gives me no joy to have my worst fears realized in terms of what it is like to work in nursing in 2003. The critical educational approach that I devised and implemented throughout the 1990s has, I believe from subsequent informal discussions with ex-students, assisted many of them to deal with significant workloads and workplace pressures. The ex-students with whom I have had contact also claim that as a result of the experience gained in the simulation they feel more confident in being able to respond to issues in ways that enhance their power base and help them to assert their professional and political agendas.

Professional nursing context

The 'angel' stereotype

A recent polling of public opinion of different professions by the Roy Morgan Research Centre (2001) placed Australian nurses at the top of the list of most admired and ethical professions for the eighth consecutive year, that is, from the first year that nurses were included in this Australian and New Zealand poll. Ninety percent of people interviewed think nurses are honest and ethical. But would they continue to hold such an impression of nurses if some of the historical myths around women and nurses were dispelled? Or if nurses began to behave in ways quite different from the stereotype of the 'ministering angel'?

In general, nurses are often perceived by others and sometimes by themselves in terms of cultural stereotypes that have given rise to stereotypical images. These

stereotypes are often based on an amalgam of female images with no basis in contemporary reality but which have affected professions comprised predominantly of women, such as nursing. Portrayals of nurses in the media as 'angels of mercy' has far-reaching consequences for nursing in that the general public which they serve, and from which future nurses are recruited, is influenced by stereotypical images of nurses and unrealistic expectations can be created about nurses and how they should behave.

Sex-role stereotypes have been influential in the shaping of the image of nursing in the public mind, as well as playing a central role down through the ages, in the formation of cultural expectations of nurse behaviours within nursing. Traditional female-coded behaviours such as acquiescence and subservience, have dominated stereotypical expectations of nurses in the nineteenth century. For the early part of the twentieth century the so-called 'angel of mercy' or the 'good nurse' was obedient, loyal, neat and cheerful and certainly did not get involved in politics or competition for control over resources. Doherty, Sirl and Ring (1960) whose text on Australian nursing was once required reading for all student nurses clearly outlined the types of behaviour expected:

The fundamental responsibility of the nurse is threefold: to conserve life, to alleviate suffering and to promote health... the nurse is under an obligation to carry out the physician's orders intelligently and loyally... the nurse sustains confidence in the physician and other members of the health team... the nurse cooperates with and maintains harmonious relationships with members of other professions...in private life adheres to standards of personal ethics which reflect credit on the profession.

It is customary to stand in the presence of doctors, matron, sisters and senior nurses. The spirit which makes one observe hospital etiquette is ethics, loyalty and a cheerful cooperation with all those with whom the nurses comes in contact.
(p. 2-3)

Because so much of nursing history has focused on an image of nurses as being self-effacing adjuncts to medicine it has been difficult to establish nursing as an independent profession. Various studies of nursing image have occurred since 1960 as nurses have worked to move away from the constraints applied to their image as 'angels' who fear to tread in places to which they have not been invited or sponsored by their 'superiors' or patrons. Kalisch and Kalisch (1982) in their seminal research on this topic noted that physicians receive most of the credit for positive health outcomes generated by nurses. They concluded that the subordinate role of the nurse to physician hindered a positive image of nursing as a profession with several serious problems arising from this image. Public opinion either promotes or hinders the

attainment of professional goals. Negative images of nursing can deter people who might have chosen to be nurses and this reduces the quality and number of persons entering that profession. Patients and clients often are not aware of the many vital services that nurses provide and this fact, added to any negative or sentimental images, restricts public trust that nurses are able to manage resources. A broad range of professional options are thereby restricted.

In Australia, Bonawit and Baker (1983) and Bonawit (1989) found that beliefs about the propriety of nursing behaviour form the basis of the nursing image in the public mind. Interestingly, they discovered that non-nurses regard any idea that nurses might act independently as giving nursing a bad image. Non-nurses who participated in these studies seem to be as unaware of the autonomous decisions and activities, which are central to nursing practice, as are patients who receive nursing services.

Nursing subservience to medicine is part of the image that persists throughout the literature (Thomstad et al 1974; Campbell 1984; Kenny and Adamson 1990; Henneman 1995; Blanchfield and Biordi 1996). One group of medical practitioners, Stein, Watts and Howell (1990) commented on the 'special relationship' between doctors and nurses claiming that it is built on mutual respect and interdependence and is steeped in history and stereotyped in popular culture. They refer to several major changes in the relationship between these two professions, the most significant being the effects of hospital-based training that socialised nursing and medical students into believing that they were entering a tightly disciplined, hierarchical situation with doctors in a position superior to nurses.

By 2000 the shortage of nurses wanting to work in hospitals had focused professional and industrial attention on the value of nursing work. The image of nurses as medical assistants was crumbling and nurses who were not prepared to work under restrictive professional hierarchies and within poorly resourced clinical areas left the profession. In effect, nurses decided to stop playing the doctor-nurse game and most who have remained in nursing have actively altered their own professional behaviour and the ways in which they interact with all other health professionals.

Although it is important that education not be perceived as both the cause and the remedy of all problems around professionalism, education and the development of leadership capacity is an integral part of the strategy that nurses need to embrace if they are to succeed. As more nurses become politically active their ability to move beyond the current industrial image of 'disunited stubborn rebels' and unify their efforts

will increase enabling them to communicate clearly their goals and issues. If this image change can be achieved, intelligent and talented people may be attracted to nursing, and a way may be found to stem the exodus of those educated, intelligent and creative people who have become disenchanted with the way nursing is regulated and led.

For many of those who choose to remain and work to establish a substantial leadership role, the professional and social responsibility taken in every facet of their practice is both well-informed and strategic. Practice frameworks based on research such as that described by Beyer (1996) include the ability of nurses to analyse, critique and evaluate options; to engage in public discussion of issues and ideas; to locate information and form multiple interpretations; to come together as equals to make public decisions; and to make a moral commitment to the common good that transcends individual self-interest. Such conceptualisations of nursing recognize what nurses do and encourage them to remain in practice. Unfortunately for many nurses in 2003, the implementation of these changes may be too little, too late.

Recent estimations by Ogle, Bethune, Nugent and Walker (2002) of the average age of clinical nurses in the public health sector is around forty years and of these, approximately 92% are females. More senior nurses whose initial socialization to the profession might well have been derived from such sources as Doherty et al (1960) may still be actively involved in nursing practice and health services management. It is also possible that some nurses may harbour similar traditional expectations of themselves and their colleagues despite being aware that the health industry environment in Australia has undergone dramatic change in both philosophy and approach to health service delivery. Predictably nurses whose professional education in the tertiary education sector has not included socialization to traditional expectations of behaviour, might expect to experience conflict and dilemma if confronted by more senior nurses who expect them to display personality traits such as deference and compliance.

Research by Wright and Smith (1993) analysed 349 registered nurses in NSW across several areas of practice and compared the results with personality traits of their American counterparts. They found that Australian nurses tended to be more willing to try new things and wanted to work autonomously, they also needed more encouragement and sympathy but at the same time were more likely to nurture others in terms of sympathizing and giving encouragement.

According to Wright and Smith (1993),

Registered nurses who placed greater emphasis on the values of bureaucratic systems that highly regard technical competence and achievement, were rule centred and tended to defer to the rules rather than make autonomous decisions.

Registered nurses with lower need for Succourance, Abasement and Change indicate a potential increase in self-esteem and confidence in their ability to practise in their chosen area of specialization.

The possibility that Deference and Autonomy are traits that apply to registered nurses generally and the differences between NSW registered nurses' and student nurses' propensity to demonstrate these traits, suggests that the success of graduate nurses' entry into practice in all clinical areas may depend on their ability to become more Deferent and less Autonomous. (p. 18-19)

If Australian nurses are entering the workforce with a predominantly nurturing and succouring set of personality traits, there is a potential misfit with a system that is increasingly bureaucratic and politically competitive. Similarly, if nurses who emulate and enforce traditional modes of behaviour are appointed to leadership positions, then the wisdom of moving Australian pre-registration nursing qualification programs to the tertiary education sector in the early 1980s could be questioned. The situation may well have altered since Wright and Smith's study as more graduates from degree and postgraduate specialization programs have entered the nursing workforce. Even so, their findings provide an interesting picture of ways in which nurses perceived themselves at the end of the last millennium. At that time the critical mass of tertiary educated nurses in NSW was quite small within a workforce of nurses who trained under the hospital apprenticeship system prior to 1983 at which time nurse education in New South Wales moved into the higher education system.

In New South Wales changes in nurse education came about as a result of a groundswell of political activity which convinced the State government to grant access by nurses to university education. Widespread anticipation existed within the nursing profession, about benefits that would flow once nurse education moved to the tertiary education sector. Discussion among nurses at that time focused on the advantages to our profession of tertiary education as outlined by Sidney Sax (1978). In his report, 'The Committee of Inquiry into Nurse Education and Training', he validated the reasoning behind efforts being made by nurses to gain access to the tertiary education system. That is, that a university education would assist the development of communication, critical thinking and therapeutic relationship skills, among others, and

would negate the effects of existing authoritarian, rigid thinking and narrow perspectives on health and nursing roles that typified the hospital training regime.

I was among the first wave of nurse educators to move from the hospital to the university context. My goal in taking up an academic position was to help graduates of nursing programs to gain sufficient levels of confidence and self-esteem to drive necessary change within the health industry. I soon realized that if socialization of students of nursing remained geared to constraining behaviour and limiting ambition, student potential would continue to be as severely curtailed as had occurred in the hospital training system.

Speedy (1987) claims that the ways in which Australian university faculties were set up to educate students did not fully encourage the development of the desired personal attributes that had been the dominant reason nurses sought access to tertiary education. In terms of nurses capturing control over their own clinical practice and developing nursing as an academic and practical discipline, she believes that political gains have been limited.

After nearly two decades of nurse education in the tertiary sector there is little evidence in the workplace that education has led to greater control by nurses over their discipline or their work. As Sutton (1996) observes, the problem for nursing in the tertiary education sector relates to the lack of effective adjustment by the nursing profession to the outcomes of higher education and to changes in higher education itself. It is entirely possible also that the move to universities may have further reduced control by nurses over their education and their ability to produce and support nursing specialists. Ogle, Bethune, Nugent and Walker (2002) identify access to postgraduate specialization as a significant problem facing nurses who might wish to pursue their specialist careers:

Undergraduate nurse education is predominantly covered by the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). In contrast, most postgraduate nurse education is currently full fee paying with course costs ranging from \$8,000 - \$10,000. Should limited postgraduate HECS places be available, allocation of any places is decided by the universities. At the end of their undergraduate nurse education, many nurses have a large HECS debt, currently in the order of \$11,000 which makes undertaking a full fee paying postgraduate course financially difficult and which may in turn contribute to the shortage of nurses in various nursing specialties. (p. 116)

In their discussion on the scope of nursing practice Ogle et al (2002) identify changes that have occurred in nursing practice, for example, the inclusion of education and management aspects in clinical nursing roles where once these were thought to be the

domain of senior nurses. Such skills include working within increasingly diverse nursing contexts and being able to mediate between medical, nursing and management personnel. Of special interest are their comments on the need to modernize the nursing agenda:

The issues raised by the examination of scope of practice of nursing providers of care have implications for the educational preparation of those nurses, and for their continuing education. There are also implications for the management of nursing and nurses, particularly in community settings. There would appear to be a need to involve educators in the promotion of the development of management skills across all levels within nursing. (p. 151)

So it appears that expectations held by a number of groups about what a nurse is and how one should behave has executed a complete reversal within the last two decades. The question arises therefore as to whether nurses have responded well to rapid change and whether students are being prepared to enter the contemporary work environment or one that is shrouded in the mists of tradition and fantasy. More importantly, if students are being provided with up-to-date clinical role information and skills, will they feel sufficiently well equipped when faced with the competitive, political and bureaucratic environment of the health industry?

Issues of power and oppression

From my own immersion in nursing culture for almost four decades I would characterize nursing culture as a disquieting amalgam of religion, military, political and philosophical frameworks. Disquieting because among the nurses I have encountered throughout my career, I have found some who zealously cling to one or more of these frameworks in the way they approach their clinical and non-clinical nursing work roles and their work relationships.

My own experiences with clinical, academic and management environments had allowed me to conclude that people respond to change and uncertainty in fairly predictable ways. In all of these environments I have witnessed and been part of extensive and systematic change and in every instance I have observed that as organisational uncertainty increases, so does an increase in political behaviours of people who can see opportunities to advance their own power and status. I have observed also that the primary organisational response to such political behaviours is an increase in bureaucratic control aimed at reducing political opportunities for people within the organisation. Generally speaking, my observation of nursing responses to increased bureaucracy has revealed a tendency to polarize. A large proportion of the

nurses whom I have observed over time quickly reduce their political behaviours in the face of bureaucratic control, while a smaller but significant group will chose active resistance to any reduction of freedom and influence.

Of course in any group of people there are the few who behave badly towards colleagues and nursing is no different in this regard. There has been widespread and gradually increasing discussion on horizontal violence and oppression within nursing (Duffy 1995; Martin 1996; and Allen 1996). Alas, the term 'horizontal violence' has now been dramatised and intellectualised so far from its conceptual origins that it has become trite. Originally the term referred to populations enduring torture and misery under despotic dictatorships resulting in the oppressed people becoming more and more self-deprecating as they internalised the opinion their oppressors hold of them. Oppression is said to be achieved at the point where oppressed people begin to refer to themselves as ignorant and believe that the oppressor has powerful magic and is therefore invulnerable. Horizontal violence is said to have occurred when oppressed people begin to copy the torture and cruelty of the oppressor to whom they defer, and perpetrate it on other oppressed people (Friere 1970). There is an obvious tension in characterizing a highly educated group such as nurses, who are well paid and held in high regard by their peers and the general public, as oppressed and ignorant victims of some despotic dictator.

Horizontal violence rhetoric accentuates the damaging effects of a few difficult members of the profession. The danger lies in the fact that it contributes to a general tendency for nurses to accept a view that we are an oppressed group within the Australian health care system and encourages some to initiate sympathy-seeking behaviours instead of dealing with problems in more rational and effective ways.

Uncritical adoption of a conceptualisation of nursing culture deriving its core identity from oppression and disempowerment amounts to an over-simplification of a complex interaction between competing factions of traditionalist and aspirational divisions within the nursing profession. The traditionalists could be described as 'nursing curators' who cling to traditional hierarchical structures and processes and who work to preserve the fundamental values supporting traditional nursing stereotypes. The aspirational group could be described as being less prepared to accept constraints imposed by history and tradition, rather they believe they are capable of resisting traditionalist efforts to constrain their professional and personal aspirations. Over many years of observation and reflection I have monitored both groups pushing their agendas with enthusiasm.

Often, the emotion accompanying political struggle leads either or both factions to claim that they are oppressed by the other. It is more likely in these situations that a temporary frustration of personal agenda has occurred rather than actual disempowerment or oppression by more powerful forces.

When interactions between professional groups are considered, the history of nursing is often linked to the influence of groups such as medicine and management and nursing literature abounds on the topic of medical dominance (Jarvis 1983; Klein 1991; Petersen 1994; Duffy 1995; Martin 1996; Gottlieb et al 1998; and Manninen 1998). On reflection, it is possible and even probable that the nursing profession has not so much been oppressed or dominated by medicine, as having been out-manoeuvred by a range of capable competitors in the health industry arena, including medicine. Control of the health industry was seized long ago by other professional groups assisted by their education, research and political acumen. Long-established political dominance over funding, power and status has led such groups to now perceive themselves as leaders within that industry. Understandably, nurses in this scenario, who have not had the same access to university education and research funding, do not have the same political profile and therefore may easily be perceived as being best suited to follow the lead of established leaders.

It is possible that issues associated with the establishment of differences in power and status between professional people and groups could relate more to education, ability and culture than to any desire by one professional group to oppress another, although the effect of this difference may be that one group leads and the other follows. Allen (1996) observes that it is through conversations and text, or discourse, around particular topics or concepts that difference is established between groups. Allen suggests that a frequent goal of the process is to create a cultural identity as a means to a political end and that success in such a venture relies on being able to establish cultural and other defining characteristics for one's own group as the implicit 'norm' against which other groups are compared.

The perspectival aspects of discourse about differences in status and power become especially problematic when claims of objectivity or scientific rigor are made by any of the competing groups or if the underlying agenda or cultural background of those involved in the discourse is covert. Medical conversations around nursing practice and education, for example, need to be considered alongside a long history of medical patronage of nursing development through education as well as medicine's

professional investment in the health system, regulation and policy. Ostensibly such investment is made in order to benefit society, but it also reinforces medicine's influence over the development and allocation of health resources.

Power relationships, in particular any inequalities in health and the forces that nourish social inequalities in Australia, are derived, according to Petersen (1994), from the relationship between knowledge and power, specifically the use of knowledge by one group to define other groups and to control them and their options. In the health industry medical knowledge is generally regarded by managers, politicians and society as having the highest credibility ranking despite often being limited to approaches to analysis that can undermine the human-centred work that health systems are set up to achieve. As a result, other types of knowledge and ways of working can be dismissed as unsupported by medicine. Unless resisted, dominant ideologies and systems of work can be imposed on a range of other health professions whose knowledge base is less empirical than biomedicine.

Keleher (1994) observes that nursing has found it difficult to overcome its colonisation into the illness sector and now needs to re-orient its practices away from the biomedical model which emphasizes ill-health and treatment, towards more community based interventions that emphasize health. Tilah (1996) also claims that medical groups have traditionally attempted to define nursing and shape the future of the profession by appropriating the focus of clinical nurses assisting medicine to achieve biomedical research and practise priorities.

Biomedical frameworks are attractive for some nurses in that they offer fully developed ways of researching, intervening in and categorizing illness and treatment. The only problem for nursing in adopting biomedical approaches in place of nursing approaches is that much of what is central to nursing can become lost. Nursing focus can be diverted to performing delegated medical tasks rather than initiating nursing responses on the basis of nursing assessments of what may be required to assist patients and clients to respond effectively to their circumstances. My belief that graduates who appreciate the strategic nature of knowledge and discourse are more likely to be capable of establishing and researching their own frameworks and approaches than those who adopt the discourse of other disciplines, motivated my search for a critical pedagogy that would bring some balance to the hegemonic influences operating on nurse education and practice.

Issues of hegemony

As a nurse I am aware that nursing culture endorses team values and 'common sense' or practical approaches to problems even though there may be little well-researched or considered evidence to support these cultural beliefs. Consequently, some nursing knowledge and bureaucratic organisation of the profession has become cultural truth rather than being considered worthy of investigation and change. The danger of cultural complacency within nursing is that it generally leaves members of the profession unprepared for the rigors of a sophisticated, political health industry environment. Cultural behaviours such as those described above are steeped in hegemony and have contributed to the shaping of nursing practice and influence over time. Hegemony is a form of ideological control where an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality supports the established order and prevents dissent against the dominant ideology.

O'Brien (1987) claims that hegemony relies on cultural relations of which education is one of the most vital in terms of elaborating the axioms and practices of 'common sense'. The creation of 'good sense' challenges accepted definitions and therefore hegemony uses education as a means of ideological reproduction. She claims that no useful analysis of hegemony, power, and ideology is possible unless it is recognised that cultural forms are not only reproduced in praxis but are also dialectically and materially grounded. Sargent (1994) describes hegemonic thought as ways of thinking about reality that are so taken for granted as to seem natural and normal, and therefore are not challenged by members of society. In this way some parallels with the earlier discussion around oppression become apparent.

Hewison's (1994) analysis of the politics of nursing centralizes the notion of power as a means to shape and influence people's thoughts and actions without them being conscious of the fact. When conceptualised as a hegemonic force, power shifts from being an observable, behavioural event, to become a more complex construction of influence set up to subvert the rights and interests of the individual. It also serves the interests of those in power or the organisation that employs the powerful person.

Writers on empowerment such as Friere (1970) and others who attempted to promote the empowerment of nurses such as Brooks and Pares (1990) and Clay (1992), confirm my own observations that generally, nurses respond ineffectively to what they perceive to be abuses of power which are usually combined with organisational politics. Throughout my professional career I have developed a level of scepticism for

organisational and political mechanisms that establish and reinforce any type of professional leadership built upon cronyism or self-aggrandizement. At best such behaviour is self-limiting and at worst, it is destructive to those expected to support and follow such leaders. In fact, many nurses choose to pursue alternate career pathways rather than persist with a work environment in which their contribution is devalued or where they have lost respect for those in leadership positions.

Darcy (1980) had earlier made a similar observation to my own regarding career choices made by nurses. Darcy described the confusion attached to nursing career pathways as a problem confronting nursing's claim to professional status. In nursing culture according to Darcy, career advancement is often synonymous with an exit from clinical practice or where artificial barriers are placed on clinical and non-clinical practice. Examples are provided such as, nurse educators with advanced theories of nursing and knowledge of nursing who cannot prescribe nursing care. Similarly nurse managers being perceived as nursing leaders but who operate only from a management perspective and they too, are non-participants in the patient's recovery process. As Darcy (1980) so expressively states:

No other profession leaves its junior members so professionally exposed. No other profession exercises such powerlessness in its drive to professionalise practice and bring excellence to patient care, as does nursing. (p. 54)

Critique of nursing and the way it has been led is part of healthy development through the presentation of divergent interpretations of structures and decisions by those who have influence. Darcy's comment on nursing leadership seems to represent the type of culture described by McLaren and Lankashear (1994) and later described as 'predatory culture' by McLaren (1996), which has been operating within the Australian health system to the disadvantage of nurses and ultimately to the people who wish to access nursing services. 'Predatory culture' is described by McLaren as:

a culture of eroticised victims and decaffeinated revolutionaries while social, cultural and human values have been subsumed within capitalism. (p. 185)

McLaren's main argument is that education plays a key role in reinforcing predatory culture by keeping people stupid. He claims that if we are to counter predatory culture we need to contest the politics and ideologies underlying post-industrial capitalism and the ways that they draw on historical patterns of power to express social inequalities. As a product of history, culture, power and ideology, he claims that social difference needs to be affirmed as diversity within a politics of cultural criticism and through a commitment to social justice. The way forward involves teaching in more critical ways

that move beyond what he terms gesture politics and invites students and teachers to analyse their own experiences, practices and what they think they know, within the broader social, cultural and economic context of society.

Because few nurses enter the health workforce with sufficient political awareness or acumen to force positive change on the health industry, a cultural environment has persisted that encourages complacency and not critique. As a result of observation and reflections on how nurses accumulate and use power in strategic ways, I have come to the view that undergraduate students in nursing can benefit from critical examination of political and hegemonic aspects of nursing. Without the skills and ability to critique their professional world, few nurses even five years after graduating will have developed critical insights into the bureaucratic and political realities of the health industry, or the nursing hierarchy, and even fewer will have accumulated the skills or attributes necessary for taking strategic action alone or collectively.

Some small departures from traditional conservatism have been apparent among some parts of the profession as the education, role, influence and political will of Australian nurses slowly changes over time. For example, New South Wales nurses in 2002 indicated an increased interest in taking public, political activity as a legitimate and effective strategy through which to effect change. Starting in October 2001 with a public march of over five thousand nurses through the streets of Sydney to the gates of Parliament House nurses delivered a petition of over two hundred thousand signatures in support of their claim for better conditions and increased wages. They continued with a sustained campaign around the issue of 'What's a nurse worth?' to raise public awareness and support for their cause in the lead-up to Industrial Relations Commission hearings on their wages claim. The recent interim decision of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission (2002) to grant a fifteen percent pay rise for nurses is an example of the success that a united group of nurses can achieve through a political campaign.

Issues of autonomy and change

In a health industry that is continually being transformed and developed in response to economic imperatives, traditional services are being abandoned in favour of diversity in many aspects of health services. Spitzer (1998) claims the health system is encountering a transformation more comprehensive and revolutionary than has ever occurred in the past. In what she describes as a 'postmodern health system', she believes that nursing needs to grapple with change if it is to survive into the future.

Within this fluid organisational and professional milieu nurses are expected by employers and colleagues to be more autonomous but to work within a team of health professionals, while nurse managers are expected to more closely control clinical services yet delegate more responsibility to others in the organisation.

The work environment in which Australian nurses now practise is so beset by complexity and competition that Lord (1995) links nursing with the economic management of health service options, such as the care of the aged community, within a range of possible services defined by government social policy. Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) contend that professionals in modern organisational environments need to be able to think critically and creatively with regard to developing whatever sophisticated literacy skills are necessary to make informed and effective choices about the worlds of politics, culture, personal relationships, the economy and work.

It has been my experience over many years that many nurses have, in the past, suffered from being inadequately prepared to deal with a sophisticated health environment driven increasingly by economic, technological, and political imperatives. This view has been supported by Watson (1988) who expressed some sadness at the distractions from caring that the health environment now imposed on nurses. An important part of the undergraduate development process is to prepare graduates capable of managing change. Professionals working in the type of environments described above need to be able to absorb the disappearance of traditional role expectations and rigid bureaucratic hierarchies that once epitomized the health care sector.

Part of the challenge for nurses in this new system lies in finding ways to deal ethically with scarcity in relation to resources for themselves and their clients as well as for other groups in society. In essence, nurses unable to cope effectively in competitive situations will be at a disadvantage in workplaces that are shaped by the ability to successfully compete for resources. Nurses need also to be able to act autonomously in their efforts to reach a balance between chaos and order, and between conflicting loyalties to clients, to their employers and to their profession.

The impetus for teachers of nurses to acquaint students with the challenges they will face in trying to deliver their clinical services in this changed environment was well captured by Spitzer (1998) who observed:

There is a conflict between the nurses' commitment to the institution and to the client. Such a conflict detracts from the ability of nurses to practice all that is

stated in their ethical code...The limited authority held by nurses is contradictory to the responsibility that they take upon to care for their clients and the commitment endorsed by their ethical code...Nurses continue to increase their body of acquired knowledge but paradoxically, have very limited authority to exercise and implement this knowledge.

The crisis that is evident in nursing today, caused by both lack of role definition and absence of strong leadership, is a clear sign that we did not read the writing on the wall. Nursing has tried to excel in its current paradigm... clinical domain, primary nursing, client centred approach, research stressing clinical therapeutics and human responses...

At the turn of the millennium nursing continues to be plagued by multiple unsolvable ancient problems and is also confronted with new problems such as the need to quantify nursing interventions and to measure their outcomes. Nursing is being challenged by the new paradigm of the changing health care system but with little preparation as to how to cope. (p. 169-169)

In terms of what needs to occur for nursing to build leadership capacity, the message is clear. Educational preparation and workplace support for high standards of practice is essential for professional and other benefits that nurses and the wider community expect to accrue from capable leadership within the profession.

Issues of control over professional practice

Very little research has been found in the literature on the linkages between competent nursing leadership and changed prospects and conditions of nursing work. There are some indications in 2003, that nursing work is being performed by people less qualified, ostensibly to reduce expenditure on clinical services and perhaps to fill vacancies left by the shortage of nurses in the workforce. Karmel and Li, as cited in the final report of the National Review of Nursing Education (2002) observed a total growth in care workers between 1987 and 2001 at a rate of 424% while in the same period registered nurses increased by just under 30% and enrolled nurse numbers actually decreased by over 20%. They note:

the importance of the missing group (missing because we do not have the data to include them in the analysis); nursing assistants and personal carers. Presumably, the reason that the ratio of nurses to patients has declined is because some of the work of nurses has increasingly been undertaken by this group. (p. 49)

The predicament that some clinical nurses face is that they may have little authority and even less power to influence nursing work that may have been redefined as 'care

work', or their authority may have been curtailed through policies constraining the workplaces in which they are employed. Nurses in such circumstances may find as they attempt to reconcile their obligations to their employers and to clients who need their services, that the learning and development gained during their undergraduate education may not have adequately prepared them for the political realities of the contemporary health system. Students who have had opportunities to experience the types of dilemmas and pressures that they may face as registered nurses, could feel better prepared than colleagues who enter the health system unaware of the political complexity and work role erosion that has become a feature of health environments over the past decade.

An example of the work role erosion mentioned above, would be incursions made by other groups into nursing work coupled with organisational systems that reduce control by nurses over the qualifications, performance standards and accountability required of those delivering nursing services. Most incursions have been as a result of the introduction to Australia in the early 1980s, of a national framework of vocational education based on units of competency (Keyzer 1995). Of interest to nursing is an explosion of training packages in 'care work' that have no theoretical foundation yet claim to be able to prepare people to deliver complex nursing and medical interventions in contexts where no professional supervision is available. Sedunary (1996) contends that this radical education movement in Australia has established a preoccupation with competency-based reforms of professional education. She calls the movement the 'new vocationalism' and locates it at the interface of modernity and post modernity.

The nursing profession's fascination with clinical competence in the 1980s left nursing ready to adopt competency-based training in place of education and it was only a matter of time before writers on nurse education whose main focus was teaching for clinical proficiency, would support the application of the national vocational training framework to nurse education. For instance, Gonczi (1999) advocated on behalf of competency based training as a part of nursing learning, arguing that it enhanced the practice basis of nursing and enabled registration authorities to measure the safety of nurses to practice. While being able to measure competence has certain appeal for those who regulate nursing, an exclusive focus on the performance of clinical tasks portrays a limited view of what nurses actually do and the education and personal development needed to support professional nurses.

While it is possible to enter into a relatively circular debate as to whether nursing is a vocation, a profession or an occupation, such an exercise would contribute little to our understanding of the relationship between empowerment of nurses and their pursuit of professional status and recognition. From the 1970s and early 1980s to the new millennium such debates are commonplace (see for instance De Young et al 1971; Stevens 1973; Katz et al 1976; Choen 1981; Riccardi and Dayani 1982; Smythe 1984; Moloney 1986; Becker and Fendler 1986; Grippando and Mitchell 1989; shoebridge 1989; Sullivan and Decker 1992; Lumby 2001). A common theme in many of these accounts is the lament of nurses who claim to be professionals, and then find that they were not able to satisfy the requirements of a more broad social conception of 'professional'. In some instances this outcome occurs because of the strong practical basis of nursing which combined theory with practice. Some solace can be gleaned from Schön (1983) who regards professionalism as being grounded in technical rationality. Later, Grundy (1984) supported Schön's inclusion of practice as evidence of professionalism, in terms of the emancipatory potential associated with action research in professional practice that is informed by a technical or practical interest, as is nursing. Whatever position people adopt on whether nursing is a profession, an occupation or a vocation is moot if nurses are not prepared to accept professional responsibility for autonomous practice or to be able to perform competently in the leadership roles they take on, or be accepted in these roles by their employers and trusted by the general public. At issue are the expectations that people have arising from these categories, regarding nurses' technical, intellectual and critical skills and the responsibility involved in roles undertaken.

In the recent National Review of Nurse Education (2002) Saltmarsh, North and Koop provide information on health industry satisfaction with the clinical skills of graduate nurses. Across public, private and charitable health care sectors, there was a distinct perception that registered nurses were only occasionally clinically proficient. The lowest scores for new graduates (within three months of graduation) were allocated to their ability to manage time at work. Satisfaction with knowledge levels rated slightly higher at 'usually satisfied'. It was particularly interesting that the majority of feedback came from the aged care sector where registered nurses are employed primarily for their management skills rather than their clinical proficiency and where vacancy rates for registered nurses are at crisis point.

Issues of cultural adaptation

During my involvement in the final year Bachelor of Nursing program I became increasingly concerned with issues related to the opportunities nurses were being offered as they prepared to enter a changing professional environment. I was teaching subjects associated with more autonomous practise but amid widespread questions and discussion among professional nurses about the effectiveness of universities in producing graduates in adequate numbers who were capable of clinical proficiency in the health industry. While clinical proficiency is, and should remain, the basis of accredited nursing degree programs, it is vital we acknowledge that nurses need other skills if they are to enter and survive a critical and demanding work environment. Adaptation to new roles and work environments requires new graduates to take certain risks and gather new experiences while trying to learn the culture of the particular workplace they have entered. In pedagogical terms this entails highlighting and clarifying aspects of nursing culture that constrain the type of risk-taking and critical analysis skills that students need to attain prior to graduation so that a successful transition from student to registered nurse can occur. This period of transition is fraught with difficulties and can deter new graduates from continuing as part of the nursing workforce.

If graduates ever expect to fully understand the health industry environment to the level where they feel able to establish and maintain systems and environments to support excellence in nursing practice, they need to accumulate organisational and professional survival skills that extend beyond their performance as clinicians. The transition to becoming a registered nurse, for many, is quite stressful and the desire of neophyte nurses to fit into the organisational culture can result in compliance with practices they would not normally choose to support.

Brookfield (1993) outlines the themes of 'impostorship', 'cultural suicide' and 'road running' which impact on the way nurses discuss actions that challenge established organisational culture or systems. 'Impostorship' is described as a feeling that one doesn't really deserve to be regarded as a competent professional. Perceptions of being an impostor can be triggered by situations involving public scrutiny or commentary on our practice, or if we are asked to present our work or views to professional colleagues. Dangers associated with daring to overcome feelings of 'impostorship' are linked to the reactions that can come from colleagues and those in authority. Brookfield also describes how others may respond to a person who

collaborates too well outside nursing and is consequently marginalized by their nursing colleagues. This is termed 'cultural suicide' because it can effectively close off or exclude the person from the organisational culture and particularly from the cultural myths associated with nursing teamwork. Marginalization can occur subtly by way of colleagues avoiding discussion of the project, or less subtly by ridiculing the person and the project. The strength to endure Marginalization and still pursue one's agenda can only come from analysing the reasons for such responses and having the political skills and forbearance needed to work around the obstacles. Learning within the work environment in a way that leads to change, is described by Brookfield as 'road running.' This process involves a halting, jagged, incrementally-fluctuating rhythm of leaning that is associated with considerable emotional stress as the person tries to make sense of their situation. This process can also be manipulated by colleagues and those in authority to either advantage or disadvantage a person who is trying to learn the culture in order to succeed in that environment.

As the first survival task associated with becoming a nurse, the transition period following graduation is fraught with uncertainty, frustration and personal stress but I believed that the process could be assisted if student entered this transition period with critical analytical skills and an understanding of power and politics. The simulation-based critical pedagogy subject offered to students in the Bachelor of Nursing degree exposed them in a small way to the types of pressure identified by Brookfield referred to above. As it happens, the pedagogy did assist a large number of students to build resilience against the types of stress emerging from competitive environments during their years of study, many of whom also believed they had built their capacity for leadership.

Issues of credible leadership

The initial concept of leadership that led to my encouraging students to take on leadership roles and to see themselves as capable leaders grew from my own experience of working with health professionals, academics and managers in a range of contexts. Having been exposed to the idea of leadership during earlier studies in a management degree, I had come to accept that leadership is the ability to influence a group of people toward the achievement of goals as expounded by Robbins (1983) but also that the ways in which people perform in leadership roles are infinitely variable depending on the people and contexts involved. Over time I have observed that people's expectations of their leaders are also varied but in every instance, leaders are

expected to take responsibility for decisions and to accept the consequences of their actions or lack thereof.

From my own experience of working with nurses and other health professionals, I noticed that many avoided leadership roles and responsibilities because these roles often involved distancing oneself from close clinical involvement with patients. My intention as a teacher, was to encourage students to perceive management and leadership as integral to their professional role rather than as pathways into education or management careers. Bernhard and Walsh (1990) agree that leadership is important to the professionalisation of nursing. In their view, leadership is a process used to move a group towards goal setting and achievement and is a process that can be used by any person. They agree with my own view that, theoretically, anyone can be a leader and that leadership can be learned. In order to learn to be a leader, Bernhard and Walsh recommend that the person have a goal to which they are strongly committed, they need to gather at least one follower to their cause, and to follow a systematic leadership process. The leadership process proposed by Bernhard and Walsh involves being aware of strengths and weaknesses in oneself and others, being assertive in expressing views while respecting the rights of others, being accountable to oneself, the group and others for the outcomes of one's actions, and being prepared to advocate on behalf of others who need social, political, economic or other support.

From the evidence presented by students via the journals quoted in subsequent chapters, most students at the commencement of the simulation thought leadership to be an attribute which certain people are born with and others not, and that this lottery is not able to be changed. Student perspectives reflected a widespread acceptance by people in the community that some people are born leaders and everyone else should accept their 'follower' station in life. This notion, first posited by Plato (427-347 BC) in 'The Republic', prescribes a way in which rulers might gain acceptance from warriors and workers whose contribution to society was far more valuable in practical terms, than that of intellectuals who aspired to ruler-ship. In the paraphrased quote below, Plato openly states that rulers (or leaders) must practice deceit in order that others will allow them to continue to lead.

It is the business of the rulers of the city if it is anybody's to tell lies deceiving both its enemies and its own citizens for the benefit of the city and no one else must touch this privilege... If the ruler catches anyone else in a lie... then he will punish him for introducing a practice which

injures and endangers the city... Could we perhaps fabricate one of those very handy lies? With the help of one singly lordly lie we may, if we are lucky, persuade even the rulers themselves. (p. 8-11)

Plato's 'Myth of blood and soil' or 'Theory of the metals' suggests that some people are born gold (born to rule), a lie that has persisted through time and has been continually endorsed by those who want others to believe they are born to rule unchallenged, and also by those wanting to avoid making the effort to lead. Plato's idea of a 'golden' leader could easily be confused with the Conger and Kanungo (1998) concept of a charismatic leader however the difference is substantial. In Plato's classic deception, the purpose was not to explain something that actually occurred, that is, that some people are born leaders, but rather the purpose was political. Intellectuals of that time were hardly charismatic, or even talented, when compared with warriors and artisans whose feats attracted the admiration and gratitude of the masses. Those who sought power over these skilful people needed to convince all that being a leader was something determined by nature (or the Gods) and therefore should be accepted, in other words, not resisted.

Alternately, charismatic leaders have been described by Weber (1947), quoted by Conger and Kanungo, as extraordinary individuals who are set apart from ordinary people by their exceptional qualities and powers which are not accessible to ordinary people (p. 12). While Weber's idea of charismatic leaders has since become more expansive to include being able to creatively focus on key issues, communicate effectively, demonstrate trustworthiness and show self-respect and respect toward others, the two key aspects of a charismatic leader remain the ability to provide 'visionary leadership', and to take personal risks. Bass and Avolio (1993) also quoted by Conger and Kanungo, state that while charisma is a necessary ingredient in transformational leadership, 'charisma by itself is not sufficient to account for the transformational process' (p. 14).

Students involved in the simulation tested leadership and management roles and responsibilities over time, and as a result, each developed a concept of leadership that was meaningful to their own experience. From their journals there are indications that they learned to recognise 'leaders' and 'leadership' in their colleagues as well as in themselves. Throughout their reflections, students identified various elements of leadership that they could endorse and these differed from student to student. Many

journals contain versions of an idea that competent leadership can be felt collectively throughout the group and, as a result of credible leaders, the level of energy and contribution by all participants is improved. Students also identified problems emerging from incompetent leadership as including group disunity and diminution of commitment to group goals. They found that the skills and responsibilities of being a leader can be learned and that success as a leader in nursing, depends on being able to gather the support of followers who possess similar ability and capacity for leadership as oneself, and who will not support incompetent leader behaviour.

General expectations of leaders are that they act to enhance the capabilities of those they lead by providing clear goals and creating an environment that motivates others to pursue excellence in their work. Batten (1989) states succinctly that 'managers push and direct while leaders pull and expect'. He refers to the following elements as being at the heart of leadership:

1. Spiritual values or a philosophy that inform the policies and practices of an organisation
2. Self-confidence which fuels innovation and creative energy
3. Physical mental and spiritual fitness
4. Happiness derived from fitness, confidence, involvement and working with the group.

Batten identifies power as the 'fuel' of leadership and claims that organisational culture, vision, goals and performance depend on power that is properly developed, deployed and used to create expectations of performance rather than merely directing and controlling others which, he claims, is management. Leadership characteristics derived from Batten's analysis of successful leadership behaviour include (i) integrity that pervades and suffuses so that learning and development can occur (ii) being a person who is open, warm, constant and sharing, and (iii) leading and managing change by valuing others, being flexible while striving for high standards.

Conger and Kanungo (1998) quote the early work of James McGregor Burns who, in 1978, identified leaders as being either 'transformational' or 'transactional'. In Burns' model, leadership is based on the notion of exchange where both leaders and followers bring something to the situation. In transactional situations leaders, for example, offer wages for a specified type or amount of work. Transformational leadership on the other hand, involves leaders offering a transcendent purpose that meets higher-order needs

of followers and, in the process of achieving that purpose, both leaders and followers are transformed and actualised as people as followers turn into leaders and leaders become moral agents.

The distinction between leaders and managers has been touted by some writers to be significant in the effect on how organisations approach their challenges. Essential differences between managers and leaders have been emphasised by several organisational theorists who seem focussed on establishing leadership as somehow more artful in creating organisational environments that can succeed where management has failed (For example, Novis 1999; Kouzes and Posner 2002; Parry and Meindl 2002). In characterising the role and activities of leading, these writers locate administrative, supervisory and leadership functions within the managerial role although only the leadership function is perceived as moving the organisation or team beyond the *status quo* and enabling people to adapt within a changing environment.

Distinctions between management and leadership abilities tend to be more academic than practical and there is evidence from students' journals that they discovered that the achievement of their projects required both management and leadership abilities to be possessed by all involved with the group activity. Such a view has support from writers who use 'management' and 'leadership' interchangeably to describe effective organisations which, in essence, are groups of people working together to achieve a goal. For instance, 'true leaders' as identified by Bennis (1993) are not just 'good managers' although he endorses the ability to manage as being an important skill for leaders. He claims that leaders can affect the culture of, and act as social architects for, their organisations while creating and maintaining values that inspire confidence. From his study of ninety successful leaders he identified four competencies that were common to all:

1. the management of attention which is the ability to draw others to share their clear vision or agenda.
2. the management of meaning which involves being able to communicate clearly what is expected so that all can align their efforts to achieve something meaningful.
3. The management of trust which relates to reliability or constancy so that those who follow have some certainty about the focus and direction of the leader.
4. The management of self involves knowing one's skills and effectively using them so that others can develop competence.

A shift of focus has occurred within the leadership literature, moving from an authoritarian model of leadership to one that requires leaders to find ways to inspire, involve and empower their colleagues. The participative leadership model as described by Zoglio (1994) typifies this shift and is a model that I find most satisfying to work with however, I have found that the model is best applied when working with professional teams who are all committed to achieving high standards. Participative leader behaviour includes being able to communicate clearly what is required in a way that involves followers in developing realistic goals and accountabilities. Under this model delegation is used as a way of developing talent and is done in an appropriate way. Team focus in this model focuses on process rather than the performance of separate tasks. It is this leadership approach that I attempted to model for the students to observe throughout the simulation.

It was hoped that, as a result of experiencing various approaches to team participation, students would be able to experience a range of leadership and management approaches, including my own participative style, and draw on that experience to evaluate the credibility of people occupying leadership and follower-ship positions, including their own performance in such roles. Applied in the post-graduate world of their profession, they will be able to use this information as a basis for decisions about the extent of their own involvement in any situation they enter. The range of roles and contexts that students experienced in the simulation was also designed to equip them with insights about the interplay of people and contexts. In this way it was hoped that students might appreciate that their personal opportunities for influencing people and outcomes are continually changing and can be enhanced. Being alert for such opportunities is just one of the factors that may help them to succeed in their professional careers.

Teaching context

At the commencement of my academic career in higher education I worked closely with nurse teachers in various educational organisations and was in a position to observe a tendency for nurse education to adopt the lecture and tutorial approaches of other professional degree programs rather than take opportunities to be innovative. Many nursing faculties within a few years of being in universities, began to move away from the hospital-based curricula that they had initially adapted to the university context, and develop curricula that mimicked traditional medical, psychology and sociology approaches to education. Some impetus for these decisions maybe due to the fact that

most academics developing nursing programs at that time had studied extensively in these other health disciplines as there had been no nursing programs available at that level in Australia.

My suspicion that pedagogical approaches tailored to the needs of contemporary students of nursing or the nursing workforce were rare, was supported in 1992 when I collected and examined tertiary nurse education curriculum documents gathered from nursing faculties across Australia. I found little evidence of emphasis on development of intellectual skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, or the skills needed to support competitive or political engagement with other professional groups or the health bureaucracy or even other nurses. Throughout these curricula little attention seemed to have been given to the fact that most students of nursing are women whose learning needs may not be satisfied by traditional male-oriented learning processes that abound in medical, psychology and other health professional courses.

An understanding of the learning needs that a majority of students in nursing programs may have seemed to me to be essential if teachers were to devise ways to help the process of learning. As I worked on developing a pedagogical approach that would recognise such different learning patterns, certain insights about the ways women learn were provided by Laughlin et al (1992). Briefly that research endorses the value of critical reflection and in particular, self-reflection as a way of learning to be more self-directed and more able to tolerate ambiguity. They highlight the relationship between the 'knower' and the 'known' as bringing authenticity to the way women learn and construct the knowledge that motivates action. Laughlin refers to the work of Belinky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) who identify levels of perspectives women have of the relationship between the 'knower' and the 'known':

- (i) Silence - and Received knowing- which reflects a woman's loss of self and complete dependence on authority for knowledge.
- (ii) Subjective knowing - is founded on trust and intuitive knowing as the source of her knowing.
- (iii) Procedural knowing - consists of two different approaches to making meaning.
- (iv) Separate knowing- where knowing is objective in relation to the known; and Connected knowing -where by using empathy to establish a connection with the known.
- (v) Constructed knowing - represents the integration of reason and intuition in constructing knowledge. (p. 79-87)

It was my goal to help students to reach the level of 'constructed knowing' through critical reflection on professional leadership experiences gained as undergraduates. I was well aware at that time that students of nursing were not encouraged by faculty to be politically active or to strive for autonomy despite some writers endorsing the inclusion of learning experiences that enhance professional autonomy in nursing curriculum. For instance, James and Clarke (1994) recommend that teachers of professional degrees incorporate certain basic considerations that assist graduates from professional studies to:

- (i) gain sufficient specific knowledge and skills associated with their professional interest, to allow them entry into that group, but also a grasp of the directions in which their group may choose to go in the future.
- (ii) gain knowledge of the history which led to the contemporary definition of their profession and its relationship with other groups, but without creating an over-dependence on historical roles and ways of operating.
- (iii) reinforce the basic technology, literacy and numeracy skills learned in high school, but sufficient to lift them beyond the generic capabilities of the mass educated.
- (iv) develop of self-awareness, logical reasoning and critical understanding of situations and contexts.
- (v) develop personally as a result of learning and problem-solving, that positions graduates to initiate their own ongoing formal and informal learning.
- (vi) build self-confidence through accumulation of specific discipline and generic professional and personal skills within a framework of social responsibility and citizenship. (p. 82-85)

It was my hope that as a result of the simulation-based critical educational experience, students would be capable of acting in the best interests of their clients, their employers, their colleagues and themselves once they graduated. My general expectation was that choices made by graduates would be guided by professional ethics, the values of the society in which they were practicing, and their own level of competence. Practitioners who understand the broader bureaucratic and political environment of the health industry and various strategies by which agendas can be influenced, are well placed to support their professional practice and thereby benefit the people they serve. The emphasis of the pedagogy was, at all times, the building of leadership capacity while reinforcing and consolidating aspects of knowledge and skills gained during earlier years of study and in some instance, their life experiences.

The shaping of pedagogical purpose and style

In the early 1970s, shortly after commencing my teaching career in hospital-based pre-registration training, I had become aware of the work of Chickering (1969) who is disparaging of teaching approaches that assess student memory of lecture and textbook content as a means of stratifying them into grades or as a way of rationalizing the teaching work involved. He identifies the range of student learning outcomes as skills in analysis and synthesis, development of self-confidence and feelings of competence, having a sense of autonomy, identity and purpose, and being able to develop and maintain positive interpersonal relationships. These attributes were precisely the benefits of learning that I envisaged for students of nursing but facilitating these learning outcomes was quite difficult in the hospital training environment.

In 1983, after moving to the university to set up nursing courses, I discovered a teaching approach described by Carr and Kemmis (1986) that seemed to resonate with the way I wanted to teach. Their approach is openly ideological, socially critical, political and emancipatory in orientation and encourages critique of power and authority.

Many of my colleagues at that time were keen to focus on teaching for clinical competence and also in securing the place of nursing within the tertiary education environment. While I also worked to achieve these broad goals I continued to investigate different ways to improve my teaching and soon discovered the work of Jean Watson (1988). A prominent nurse and scholar, Watson claims that nursing education fails to address the issue of how to educate and prepare nurses to work in health institutions. For the most part, Watson promotes the structuring of learning experiences in a way that centralizes student development processes and encourages critical consciousness and liberation, while still preparing nurses to deliver safe and effective nursing services. I found her work on critical-thinking scholarship and the philosophical and moral context of health and human caring quite useful throughout the processes of curriculum development. Along with other faculty colleagues I was able to incorporate some of her ideas into the revised undergraduate nursing curriculum as well as my own approaches to teaching and learning. Significantly, I was encouraged by Watson's work to pursue a teaching approach relevant to the learning and development needs of students as well as meeting the health service needs of the general public. During a conference at Robinson College, Cambridge, England in 1996 where I presented a paper on the teaching and learning approach discussed here, I

was fortunate to be able to discuss my ideas and concerns at length with Dr. Watson and received considerable encouragement to persist with the simulation-based strategy that encouraged students to be more self-determining.

A further source of inspiration was found in an article by Bevis and Murray (1990, p.326) who describe teaching as a political activity within which hidden messages about what is valued and who has power and control, are delivered from teachers to students. They claim that people teaching nurses often teach more than nursing, including an attitude towards oneself and authority that could sabotage the very characteristics that nurses will need if they are to provide quality services and ensure equitable access by the public to those services. Traditional curricula that reinforce authoritarian roles are incongruent with emancipation, claim Bevis and Murray who suggest that teachers wishing to move away from oppressive approaches in their teaching would find it difficult to do so because the oppressive lecture format is so entrenched. While they claim that all lectures are potentially oppressive in nature, Bevis and Murray admit that not all teacher-talk is lecture if it is supportive of emancipation. My pedagogical efforts were to incorporate emancipatory approaches that encourage scholarship that enable students to investigate assumptions and information through which both questions and conclusions about their profession can occur.

Other sources of information that assisted me to design a critical education strategy include Kincheloe (1993) whose main focus is on educational change and the need for teachers to alter their perceptions of their responsibilities so that the emphasis moves to teaching students how to think critically. Also, Harris (1994) stresses the urgency of incorporating social aspects of education and the attitudes of teachers as recognizable elements in influencing educational outcomes for students. Deevers (1997) raises the question of defining teacher accountability and the types of organisational and educational change that are needed for power imbalances between teacher and students to be resolved.

As a result of my reading on the various issues I was convinced that students would benefit from an opportunity to learn how to interact effectively with the socio-political environments in which they would have to apply their skills and knowledge. I wondered if I could set up a learning situation in which students could experience political and competitive behaviours similar to that in professional environments. Such an experience I believed would encourage students to think critically about leadership responsibility and their own leadership potential but it would require them to become

more involved in controlling their own learning and development. I also wondered whether students would accept me, their teacher, as a participant learner in a process that would be new territory for me as well as them.

From the outset I openly admitted to the students that I wanted to learn from the experience and that I would be evaluating the strategy with a view to improving my own teaching. Most of the students readily accepted my proposal, even those who approached this unusual learning experience with some trepidation. I realised that within these proposals existed undercurrents of power shifts and role reversals and clearly, much of what I was considering involved potential changes and even upheaval to teacher and student power relationships.

Power imbalances and interrelationships between students and teacher are steeped in symbolism and the building of personal, political identity. Each person establishes a view of themselves and of others within an epistemological community and we each have an image of what constitutes knowledge and truth and what should be discarded as worthless or fiction. Wallcott (1994) refers to these relationships as being the product of 'identity politics.' The problem that exists between 'identity politics' and 'political identification' is that identity politics does not necessarily support a useful approach to political action, whereas political identification can provide a position from which effective strategic action can occur.

One of the many challenges for me as a teacher was a realization that if I interacted with the students from a political position rather than reinforcing my own political identity as teacher, it was possible that the way I had set up the learning environment could be questioned in terms of my authority to do so. It was also probable that the political, hegemonic motivations that drive all teaching and learning structures would be revealed and debated once students perceived a change in the distribution of power between themselves and me. Part of my dilemma related to the level of guidance that I needed to provide so that the reflection by students became focused and action-oriented. I was also concerned that by moving students into a situation of questioning the nursing process I may be destabilizing their conceptions of what nursing entails. The nursing process is widely-used problem-solving framework that students had been encouraged to adopt during previous years of study, and which has achieved the status of an ideology among some clinical nurses and teachers.

If teachers present information in an unassailable, fully developed form that students are expected to accept without question, such a process can reinforce the type of

hegemony that contributes little to students' personal and professional development. I hoped to provide information that could raise student consciousness to a level where they could construct their own meaning and to determine their own critical responses to issues and situations. I realized that as a consequence of my approach of encouraging their insights about learning experiences and issues, my teacher role could become quite complicated as I interacted with students. Basically, I was determined to free both students and myself from the limitations of traditional curricula and in this one degree subject, Community Development NURS325, provide an opportunity to open up the learning environment.

I discovered that 'opening up the learning environment' to greater involvement by students was not entirely welcomed by some students and faculty members. Particular interest was shown by some faculty colleagues in the power-sharing that occurred between me and the students and some expressed concerns regarding the effect that this arrangement might have on student expectations about their own teaching approaches. For example, one colleague complained that students in the simulation seemed to be less interested in other subjects and that it was unreasonable that other teachers should have to compete for student interest.

During the various simulations, improvements in students' understanding of strategic opportunities were evident in their behaviour during lectures. For instance, during a debate about assessment, students began to negotiate with me about the assessment of their project presentations leading to a group mark. Later, when a teacher managing another subject proposed to alter that subject's assessment, students became quite vocal and, using their newly honed debating skills, prevented the change from being implemented. Smyth (1992) warns of the possibility of such resistance occurring but also provides some solace in terms of positive outcomes. In his view,

When teachers become engaged in the struggle for the social, the intellectual, the ethical and the political in their teaching, then they will have gone a substantial way towards reclaiming what is properly theirs, and which they have lost by neglect and default to bureaucrats, managers and politicians. To teach against the grain teachers have to be prepared to cultivate and live with a certain amount of ambiguity and perplexity in the form of 'critical dissonance' while also finding ways of intensifying the co-labour of learning communities through collaborative resistance. 'Critical resonance' is a more proactive process of searching out co-conspirators with whom to engage in the struggle of generating the forms of experimentation necessary to effectively confront one's own teaching... The agenda of both are similar: to confront deeply embedded

biographies and histories and the factors that lie behind their construction and maintenance... to puncture the images of normality. (p. 5)

I did find 'co-conspirators' with some faculty colleagues emulating aspects critical educational approaches and moving beyond the vocational emphasis that pervaded nurse education at that time. The development of a critical approach to future education depends on nurse scholars and researchers being able and willing to question the status quo and try innovative approaches to teaching and learning so that students, as well as the industry in which they intend to practise, can benefit.

As I pondered on the potential benefits of student learning within a simulation-based critical pedagogy that incorporated the contextual concerns outlined in the previous chapter, I tried to visualize what the health industry might look like as a result of an influx of new graduates with increased capacity for leadership. In the scenario that I constructed I thought that they could work to ensure that nurses envisaged themselves as leaders rather than followers within the health industry. Nurses in such a scenario might exercise sufficient influence over the introduction of management and work systems to ensure that expert nursing teams were preserved, and professional standards endorses. It occurred to me that if nursing had a group of energetic and credible leaders, a culture of scholarly collaboration could thrive among nurses working in clinical practice and those in nurse education and management. Competent leaders would be central participants in decisions and policy affecting their conditions of work and their work environments and they would ensure that policies developed by others did not erode any power nurses have over their own practice and the contexts in which it occurs. In my idealized vision, these new leaders would work to establish and defend the intellectual and autonomous components of nursing practice, research and scholarship. In other words, my impression was that if more graduates believed they were capable of credible leadership there would be benefits at every level of the profession, the health industry and for the general public.

Chapter 2: The simulation-based pedagogy

As the discussion and presentation of data that follows makes frequent reference to the simulation-based educational strategy it is perhaps useful to provide an overview of the subject, the simulation and how it was implemented. More detailed information on the subject objectives, guidelines for aspects of the simulation, and assessment are provided in the Appendix

The undergraduate subject

During the period in which the simulation-based educational strategy was conducted, the final year of the Bachelor of Nursing focused on a theme of 'towards autonomy in practice'. It was made up of compulsory program subjects dealing with practice contexts requiring increasing levels of professional autonomy and responsibility such as management, community health, community development and critical care. The Community Development subject, NURS325, was scheduled during either the first or second semester, depending on the need for students to attend clinical placements in other subjects running concurrently. Details of the semester structure are provided in Appendix C.

The theoretical component of the subject focused on the development of self-reliance and health promotion within communities. Subject content included health promotion and health education, community activism and self-managed practice.

Instead of participating in tutorial groups, students in this subject worked in project teams. Their task was to analyse a community situation that would benefit from community development; develop an appropriate health promotion or health education program; work together to set up and refine a strategy for the target group; and then present the event to that group within the general community.

The project teams were set up as formal committees with a chairperson and secretary. Working groups with group leaders were responsible for work allocated and for reporting formally on progress to the committee each week. Formal committee procedures and language were required during meetings and minutes were kept of the meetings and other activities that they deemed important.

The simulation goals

Under the theme of developing autonomy, students were encouraged to take responsibility for their projects which were very real even though they were being developed within a simulated bureaucratic environment. This included deciding on how to assess the target group; analysing what aspects of the situation could benefit from a community development activity; development of the project; allocation of work and responsibilities within the group and also to monitor and evaluate the teams performance.

By encouraging students to take control of their projects it was envisaged that they would have opportunities to apply many of the theoretical concepts learned previously in other degree subjects, to the team in which they had been placed and within the project situation.

It was also envisaged that by experiencing leadership responsibility, time management, resource coordination and formal ways of communicating within the simulation, they might become more self-reliant and interact with each other on a more professional level rather than relying only on friendship networks.

Political skill and ability was fostered so that students could experience competition and political strategies within the relatively safe environment of the university campus. The establishment of competitive and political activity was a critical aspect of simulating the types of pressure that exists within the health industry and which students would have to confront following graduation.

Structural components of the simulation

The project team was scheduled to meet for one hour each week and this became known as the 'main committee meeting' which was conducted according to formal rules of committee meetings. The chairperson and secretary were called the 'management team' and were elected by the project team.

Within the main committee were a range of other working groups, or task groups, which were allocated particular tasks such as: topic research, team evaluation, presentation and display, public relations and media. The permanent leaders of these working groups reported back to the main committee each week on the progress of their working group.

Five hours of theoretical or lecture time was available each week. Four of these hours were given to lecture presentation of information pertaining to community development

theory and practice. The remaining hour each week was used as an opportunity for debate and discussion of matters arising from the team projects. My aim was similar to the use of debate as a teaching strategy described by Garrett et al (1996) involving the development of student critical thinking and articulate communication. This hour became known as 'the forum'.

The 'forum' occurred in an auditorium and involved the delivery of progress reports from the project teams to the combined student group which ranged from eighty to one hundred and twenty students. The chairperson each week delivered the presentation, with the assistance of the secretary, and answered any questions from the floor regarding their project. The remainder of the 'forum' was chaired by me and was given over to discussions and debates around issues that had been raised or those arising from the forum participants.

Setting up a competitive environment

Competition needed to be fostered in order to stimulate the types of political behaviour that feature in the health workplace. That is, competition for resources, influence, status and profile. Competitive behaviour occurred naturally once the parameters of the assessment were made known to the students.

Each week the management team for the following week was elected as the last item on the meeting agenda. These positions attracted two assessment points each time a student succeeded in being elected. Permanent leaders of working groups also received two points but only once at the beginning of the simulation.

Assessment points were allocated to the remaining committee members according to how many times their names appeared in the formal, ratified minutes of the meeting. This could be achieved by making successful proposals, seconding proposals, acknowledgement of work completed and any other ploy to raise one's personal profile.

Students knew that at the end of the simulation, the student with most mentions in the formal minutes would receive full marks for that aspect of the subject assessment, and all other students would be graded in relation to the top student. It was the students' responsibility to write, ratify and preserve the formal minutes and present them for assessment at the end of the simulation.

Empowerment and emancipation

During my own early development as a teacher I was aware of a growing body of opinion that supported the notion of 'empowerment.' Empowerment had taken on quite a fashionable flavour in the late 1970s and seemed readily applicable to any context where a difference in power existed between individuals or groups. An example was the popular movement within nursing that advocated for empowerment of patients who were generally perceived to have been disadvantaged in the relationship between health professionals and patients (Fulton 1997). More broadly, similar discussions were applied to teachers and students, doctors and nurses, citizens and the police force, and many other examples of groups endorsing the empowerment ideal.

Despite the popular nature of empowerment at that time, I was interested in the outcome of encouraging students to take more control of their learning situation or rather, empowering themselves. Empowerment is defined by Hawkes (1992) as:

The interpersonal process of providing the proper tools, resources and environment to build, develop and increase the ability and effectiveness of others in setting and reaching goals for individual and social ends. (p. 610)

While I agreed initially with the idea that empowerment occurs between those who have the power to empower and those who are empowered, as I was implementing my own strategy of 'student empowerment' I realized that a logical inconsistency existed in my being able to give or take away power as I pleased while clinging to notions of 'empowering others.' Unmistakably, what seemed to be empowerment on the surface was in reality a superficial role-play wherein I, the teacher, still retained control over who had the power and also how any shared power may be used and evaluated. During the process of deconstructing the concept of empowerment my concerns were similar to those described by Gore (1992) who also expressed suspicion about the superiority of 'we' who empower 'you' because 'we' decide that we know best what 'you' need.

My dilemma lay in wanting to empower students and therefore nurses, yet at the same time, realising that power cannot be given to those who are unaware of it, or who have no desire to be more powerful. As Wallcott (1994) observes, empowerment occurs only when people see that having power is desirable to the extent that they are prepared to take it, or at least negotiate with those in power in order to increase their own power. While the teacher may have the power to alter the structure of curricula and to provoke students into striving for greater influence over their situations, a teacher who gives up

that power easily, might be viewed by students and faculty as abdicating their teacher responsibility.

Much of my understanding of empowerment led me to appreciate that for anyone to empower themselves they first must understand how power operates and then to perceive that a shift of control was desirable. Once a level of understanding is achieved, people who want to increase their power and influence have to work out ways to convince those who possess power to give it up or to share it. I discovered during the simulation that students who experienced successful negotiations leading to power sharing, with a person who is not only powerful but reluctant to give it up unconditionally, leads to a sense of achievement and the building of self-confidence in those aspiring to influence.

Having given due consideration to the possible processes and consequences of sharing power with students, I decided that for any negotiated shift of power to occur students would have to convince me that they fully understood the implications of having power and were clear about what they wanted to achieve once they had more power. Implications included realizing that once they had power it would be theirs and they would be fully accountable for what they did with it. I was keen to ensure that they appreciated the consequences of taking control in terms of increased responsibility and an understanding that, even if they got themselves into difficulty and wanted to be rescued, I would not want the power returned to me. Finally, I was concerned that that the power accumulated by the students should not be used in any corrupt way or to offend codes of ethical behaviour guiding the nursing profession or the health industry.

Wallcott (1994) describes similar dilemmas experienced at the local level when he asked whether emancipatory teaching in fact reproduced new ways of enforcing disciplinary and regulatory practices in the education environment. He discovered, as did I in my experience of teaching for empowerment (emancipatory teaching), that one cannot give power away; it must be continually negotiated on the basis that it be used in non-dominating ways. Ironically, in trying to get students to want power and control, I occasionally had to set up situations that appeared to constrain their freedom in order to increase their motivation to challenge me as the person in charge, and then to negotiate with me over control and power-sharing. Student behaviour in challenging me is evidence that the experience built their awareness about power, authority, conflict and negotiation processes.

Moments for power-sharing negotiations often occurred in the student weekly forums where issues of power and control associated with their learning were debated. On once such occasion, animated debate between me and a few individuals caused some students to join in and others to be uncomfortable. It was evident from their subsequent requests for guidance as to how they could interpret what had happened, that many were dependent on received knowledge delivered by authority figures. Very few of these final year students had reached a position of confidently validating information and integrating their own experiences into new ways of operating and understanding. The stresses that students faced in coming to terms with what appeared on the surface to be a lack of clear direction and definitive information from me, were the most common reasons for seeking consultations during the first few weeks of the simulation. As they became more confident in their own ability to deal with stressful situations, I found that students sought me out more for collegial discussion than emotional support or direction.

As the simulation progressed, students openly demonstrated the satisfaction they felt whenever the student-led debate succeeded in wresting power from me or other figures they believed had authority over them. A few suspected that I had fostered the forum debates and speculated on the motivations I might have had for doing so. The public debating strategy I used was sufficiently successful in prompting students to vie with me for control, that I used it subsequently with various groups of undergraduates enrolled in this subject.

In encouraging students to revise their perceptions about me as teacher, and about the power I possessed through my teaching role, I realized that there would be changes to students' expectations about me being their protector. Wallcott (1994) describes his experience of similar problems associated with opening up the classroom to conflict and the realization by students that the learning environment is not some artificial place where equality automatically exists. Most students developed a perception of me as a person willing to debate issues and not insist that they accept my position or views on an issue, even if I expressed a seemingly dogmatic or contrary opinion to the ones they held. For example, as part of my lecture presentations I frequently role-modelled ways to articulate problems, analyse influences and explicate possible options to consider when faced with problems or dilemmas arising from their projects. Some students did not always agree with me and we would discuss and debate options as others observed the process.

I believe that teaching is not about affirming established dogma, but rather it is about articulating a range of political positions concerning nursing and social issues. Narrative can be used in similar ways to that described by Kanpol (1992) referred to earlier, in combination with the questioning approaches of critical pedagogy and the more traditional teaching approaches of professional and vocational education. The result is an eclectic learning environment in which students can investigate any issue, identify options and negotiate on process if they have the courage and daring to do so.

Part of the student support system was enabling daily access to consultation time with me for those who needed it. During individual and group consultations initiated by students, I attempted to provide the type of cognitive apprenticeship described by Farmer et al (1992). They claim that the hallmark of the professional is being able to understand and deal proficiently with ill-defined, risky and complex problems, not just the less challenging ones. In their view, cognitive apprenticeship is an instructional tool particularly well suited to teaching professionals to understand and deal proficiently with difficult problems. Their feedback from research participants was that they were helped by someone who models how to understand and deal with these situations and then provides guidance for the learner as they attempt to do what is needed. As learners become more proficient they can assume more responsibility. Broadly stated, the stages of development associated with the cognitive apprenticeship approach are:

- Stage 1. The teacher models a professional activity that the learner wants to be able to perform satisfactorily in the real world. Learners observe the model and perform the entire activity, and in so doing they develop a mental model or schema, of what doing the real thing looks like.
- Stage 2. After observing the modelling, the learners approximate doing the real thing while articulating their thoughts. Learners are encouraged to reflect on the differences between their performance and the modeller's performance in order to develop self-monitoring and self-correction skills.
- Stage 3. Learners' efforts to do the real thing are 'scaffolded' to minimise risks. 'Scaffolding' supports and helps learners and as learner skills increase, it is gradually removed.
- Stage 4. Internalising occurs when the learners are able to do the thing satisfactorily on their own and within acceptable limits. Assistance is provided on request.
- Stage 5. The teacher and learners discuss the generalisability of what has been learned. This can serve as an advance organizer relating what has been learned in the cognitive apprenticeship experience to the task of learning

subsequently how to understand and deal satisfactorily with other types of situations, learning to be able to generalize appropriately. (p. 47-48)

Preparation of professionals for practice in the health industry where continuous change and uncertainty can either advantage or disadvantage those employed there, requires a teaching and learning approach that helps them to make commitments, to take risks and to act creatively and responsibly in their practice. Forum debates and discussions that deconstructed many of the received truths associated with bureaucracy, leadership, friendship, professionalism, competition and any other ideas brought forward, encouraged students to realize that some of the concepts and philosophies with which they had become complacent could be disrupted and cause their worlds to change. It was important from an educational viewpoint, that personal challenges arising from the experience could be confronted in relative safety, while promoting political competence and the development of self-confidence. Ultimately my goal was to provide students with opportunities to define or refine their own views of what was achievable rather than accepting views powerfully delivered by others.

I knew that to accomplish such a goal, an education strategy was required that could immerse both students and teacher in the types of political and professional pressures that are inherent in the health system environment. I realized also that despite any perceptions teachers might have of their contribution to student learning, essentially the ultimate value of any learning experience is determined by the person who takes information from the teacher and combines it with what they already know in order to serve some useful purpose.

The critical pedagogy option

When searching for a way to set up such a learning approach, I discovered the most promising source of innovative teaching approaches in the literature on critical pedagogy. Grundy (1984) claims that critical pedagogy involves students and teachers in a critical examination of issues and influences that are often hidden. Although Grundy's main critical pedagogy interest is in action research the general application of similar ideas of control over professional knowledge resonate with my own belief that professional education should emancipate rather than constrain.

West (1997) endorsed a similar approach to higher education as being consistent with the interests of stakeholders in the higher education sector where increasing interest is being shown in exercising closer scrutiny of the processes and outcomes of tertiary education. Of particular interest to all stakeholders is the calibre of graduates and their

ability to operate effectively in complex and competitive environments. Karmel (1997) outlines the Australian government's stakeholder interests in tertiary education and stresses the value of government support for innovative teaching and curriculum development for professional education with outcomes that have sector-wide as well as discipline-specific benefits.

It was important for me as I planned the teaching strategy that I felt involved in a worthwhile and interesting process which provided the motivation for me to allocate the extra time and energy that the strategy required. Brent Askins and Galloy (1993) observe that teachers who do not experience the intrinsic professional rewards of teaching are the ones most likely to leave the profession. They further claim that professionalism depends on providing opportunities for contributing to the development of professional knowledge, the formation of collegial relationships beyond the immediate working environment and also the opportunity to grow intellectually as well as professionally. Macdonald and Brooker (1995) claim that critical approaches to teaching are fundamental to good practice in undergraduate studies and suggest that typical characteristics drawn from the critical pedagogy paradigm can enrich the practices of university teaching and enrich the students' learning experience.

Unfortunately, aside from extensive philosophical debate on the social and ethical consequences of using or not using critical pedagogy, there is a dearth of literature describing the application or implementation of critical pedagogy in any significant way other than for individual and often isolated lessons or parts of lessons. Critical pedagogy is described by Luke and Gore (1992) as:

a teaching tactic that acknowledges the constraints of social and bureaucratic structures on individual development but approaches teaching in a way that enhances student perceptions of equity issues and fosters their desire for autonomy within a framework of social responsibility... It also provides opportunities for mastering skills that will enable them to more effectively transact their own professional positions in a world blended from traditional, historical and also contemporary perceptions of roles, and the social merit thereof. (p. 192-210)

Critical pedagogy appeals to me as a process that can enable students to confront established frameworks and highlight conceptual inconsistencies contained in social and professional codes of belief. It also resonates with my own system of values which is inherently political in terms of questioning received truths and the credibility of authority.

The difficulties in applying critical approaches within institutions have generated a considerable body of literature. Writers such as Apple (1979), Giroux (1988, 1988, 1993), Schön (1983) and Smyth (1991) warn against teachers endorsing the language and technology of disempowerment by clinging to goals of social purpose rather than encouraging critique. Professional knowledge does serve a social purpose and tends to be tacit, traditional and ideological and as such discourages students from becoming critical. However some writers (Polyani 1964; Habermas 1970, 1972, 1974; Gadamer 1977, 1979; Grundy 1984; Brent Askins and Galloy 1993) support the combination of critical pedagogy ideas with more traditional educational approaches in order to support the promotion of intellectual critique of professional ideology. The outcome can be the development of professional growth which in turn supports the development of any profession.

I had concerns about the practical application of critical pedagogy but was encouraged by Smyth (1992) who argues that pedagogy is both a political and practical activity. He cites Simon's (1988) view that:

pedagogy is a notion that goes beyond the language of critique to teaching where it embraces questions of how knowledge is produced, in whose interests it is created, the moral character of its creators and how the production and organisation of understanding informs us about how things came to be and how they might be different. (p. 42)

Smyth states that by adding 'critical' to critical pedagogy we recognize that education is a political process that has socio-cultural consequences derived from two main areas. Firstly, the politics of difference, related to constructed and institutional relations of power; and secondly, the politics of voice, related to processes of silencing or subverting unsanctioned views, ideologies and experiences.

Stimulating students to think differently about ideas and structures that have been taken for granted is a core part of my teacher role however it is not a new idea. Foucault believes, as cited in Henneman (1995), that the role of the intellectual or philosopher is to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think about things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted and to re-examine rules and institutions. Foucault's work is very political and focuses on the ways in which governments and those in authority are able to silence the voices of critics and preserve the status quo. (Courts 1997; Muspratt et al 1997). The world of nursing is beset by political influences that shift opportunities to be heard on community and health issues, away from most nurses. Research to discover why and how nursing

voices are silenced is an area that warrants future attention. However, for the reasons outlined above, any nurses undertaking such a task should expect difficulties in their efforts to secure research funding grants from those currently in control of what is identified as a problem worthy of investigation and how issues are articulated.

Critical pedagogy as a teaching approach also has its detractors, often using similar arguments against critical pedagogy as are used by others to recommend it. Rode (1995) observes the development of a type of critical pedagogy 'trendiness' in the educational environment where discussions of empowerment, liberation, student voice, dialogue, critical thinking and democratic teaching seem to have permeated the field to such an extent that the bounds of critical pedagogy have been exceeded to the point of something akin to hegemony. He describes the classroom envisioned by critical pedagogy as being mediated by an empowering, liberating teacher who is an enlightened person with personal power, and is capable of sharing it with students. Yet in reality it is the teacher who still makes the rules in this environment because of the need to preserve the teacher as an important shaper of student lives. Those rules include the privileging of literature chosen by the teacher to the exclusion of other sources of knowledge that the students may bring to the learning context. Rode refers to the views of Gore, Ellsworth and Luke who, he claims, regard critical pedagogy as a male-coded subject and who claim that a merging of classic liberalism and Western European Marxism has become a model of resistance and leadership in critical pedagogy.

A more moderate view is expressed by Appel (1996) who embraces a critical tradition of progressive scholarship and regards definitions that have been developed about critical pedagogy as too limiting. His analysis of the various forms of educational inquiry grounded in theoretical traditions incorporates the difficulties associated with practicing enabling forms of education in a society that simultaneously celebrates and enforces differences. Consequently, Appel refers to 'critical pedagogy' as 'critical educational studies' in order to avoid the limitations inherent in established critical theory and critical pedagogy concepts. He includes in critical educational studies, a focus on identity politics and the multiple and contradictory relations of power, and endorses the local learning environment as an important site of the struggle to preserve education as an ethical enterprise. Appel claims that on making the critical process personal it may be possible to 'give voice to the subjectivities of people who have been silenced by approaches that evacuate the aesthetic, the personal and the ethical aspects of teaching roles, and install training in the place of education.'

Professional education and critical pedagogy

As I continued my search for ways to improve the teaching and learning environment for which I was responsible, I was informed and inspired by the many writers on both critical and professional educational approaches even though many were contradictory. The pedagogy that I was considering would have to extend across fourteen weeks in an undergraduate degree program at a university. It also had to achieve certain mandated learning outcomes to satisfy nursing regulation and also prepare students to work within a rigid bureaucratic work environment that poorly tolerates radical team members. In spite of the obvious difficulties, I believed that it was possible meld both areas of pedagogy to form a critical educational approach that prepared professionals who could critique their professional environments while still being able to work effectively within them. The potential contribution of a pedagogy that could challenge students and faculty to move beyond emotional and professional comfort zones and into a situation that promoted critique, debate and innovation was for me, well worth the struggle. Schön (1983) says of teachers of professionals in general:

It is difficult for them to imagine how to describe and teach what might be meant by making sense of uncertainty, performing artistically, setting problems and choosing among competing professional paradigms, when these processes seem mysterious in the light of the prevailing model of professional knowledge. (p. 25)

Ultimately I settled upon a combination of the broad principles of critical pedagogy were combined with the less flexible educational approaches that abound in professional degree programs to produce the simulation-based critical educational strategy that is now the subject of this research. One example of combined critical and professional pedagogical approaches is that of peer review. In any work environment, the rules that establish what will be acknowledged and what remains invisible allows some people to appear capable and others less so. In the simulation, peer review was fundamental to the control that students held over their projects. The simulation rules stated that only ideas and work acknowledged by peers in the committee would be assessed. By setting the rules in this way, students experienced having their work peer reviewed as well as taking responsibility for reviewing the work of others. Admittedly, this is a novel expectation of undergraduate students but in the final year of their professional degree, it is not unrealistic to expect that they apply their critical intellectual skills to the work they are doing.

For many students the responsibility for making their own ideas known to others, as well as ensuring that they listened closely to their colleagues and participating in

debates, was more than they had undertaken during their previous university experience. Added to the mix of influences was the need to compete for profile and to be seen as credible among peers. Through the learning process students moved from a position of being absorbed only in their own work to taking a professional interest in the quality and credibility of the work of their colleagues.

Teaching and assessing reflection

During the teaching and learning strategy students recorded their individual perceptions of the learning experience in reflective journals. They were asked to focus their reflection on simulation experiences in terms of analysing what was happening and why people might be behaving in certain ways, and also to consider their own behaviour and goals as well as any strategic action they might take in order to secure those goals. The journals were assessed on the basis of critical reflection and intellectual critique and the marks contributed to the overall subject assessment.

My experience as a teacher has led me to conclude that even if a learning situation is designed to achieve a pre-determined range of learning outcomes the experience of learning is different for every individual. There is no one product of any learning experience that can be attributed to particular activities or approaches taken by the teacher alone. The full range of learner responses and learning outcomes emerging from a particular approach to teaching must therefore acknowledge learning that occurs outside the accumulation and application of prescribed knowledge. One way to capture this broader field of learning experience is through critically reflective journaling.

It is often the context of learning that provides many of the elements necessary for experience to become meaningful for a person who is prepared to reflect deeply upon what has occurred and how their participation may have influenced the outcome. Reflective learning was a core part of the strategy and students were asked to use their journals to reflect on the processes and changes they experienced as part of the simulation. The point was firmly made that the reflective journals were not personal diaries but rather a tool to use to clarify insights and support strategic planning and analysis.

Students were required to hand-write their reflections legibly in a bound exercise book. The format of the journals was important because students did not need any technology other than a pencil to make entries at any time, anywhere. By preventing

them from changing entries over time, a picture of their experiences and personal development became possible and many students found being able to re-read earlier entries and then reflect on how their views had altered, to be one of the more valuable aspects of journaling and reflection.

The literature abounds with research claiming that reflection on experience adds to the learning that can be gained from experience and that it enables the building of thoughtful responses to similar situations that may arise in the future (Powell 1989; Burrows 1995; Shields 1995; Paterson 1995; Glen 1995; Johns 1995, 1996; and Greenwood 1997). During a visit to the University of Luton in the United Kingdom in 1997 I was fortunate to be able to discuss aspects of this pedagogy with Dr Christopher Johns at the Centre for Reflective and Effective Practice. I was aware of his critical views (Johns, 1995; 1996) around nursing processes that neglect getting to know the person and how they might perceive the situation before initiating nursing interventions. I was also privileged during my visit to be able to observe his approach to guided reflection with clinical nurses in stressful workplaces. We discussed at length the extent to which a teacher should become involved in guiding student reflection and also, the authority teachers have to place students into stressful situations such as the simulation-based pedagogy in which I was involved. I emerged from these conversations persuaded that as a teacher it was my responsibility to provide the level of guidance that I believed would help students to achieve learning. In terms of exposing students to a fairly stressful simulation we concluded that so long as the stress did not exceed that of the environment being simulated the learning experience could be supported as ethical and the experience a valuable one upon which to reflect.

Journals that focus one's thoughts on experiences over time can provide an opportunity to examine the processes and values that prompt opinion development and lead to strategic action. Reflection as a means of learning and gaining control over one's situation has been researched and described since early last century. Dewey (1933) identifies the qualities necessary to undertake reflection as including an open mind, being responsible, having a wholehearted approach in order to consider the outcomes of actions one might wish to undertake, and taking active control over one's own education and practice. Reflection on personal experiences as well as the experiences of others is generally accepted as part of professional efforts to ensure that practice adheres to acceptable standards of ethics and standards of service.

Critical reflection is more than a passive individualistic interpretation of events. It is a skill involving heightened self-awareness within a real-world context and leads to social consequences. Kemmis (1985) claims that reflection is an action-oriented and historically embedded process that is social as well as individual. In this way, journaling and reflection can be uncomfortable and may even result in critical review of established opinions, relationships and even personal goals. Because reflection is about serving human interests it is a political process shaped by ideology as well as causing ideological change. Reflection may be an internal process, but it involves targeting external entities and deals with the real world where action is to be taken. Human behaviour as a result of reflection is a manifestation of how we perceive ourselves and the influence we exert over our own lives.

Reflection calls upon what has gone before in one's own experience and also what one has become aware of through listening to experiences of others. It would be easy to assume that exposure to any forceful paradigm, for example the biomedical view of the world, would influence one's reflections and therefore the eventual outcome of reflection. A proposition strongly argued by Lauder (1994) and Mitchell (1994) is that because of the historical links nursing has had with medical views of people and their value systems, any reflections by nurses who have been educated within the biomedical view would automatically incorporate the central tenets of that paradigm. Such a proposition demonstrates a lack of confidence in the intellectual skills of nurses engaged in clinical, management or education pursuits in that it assumes that the biomedical model is so all-pervasive as to overwhelm conscious thought and action.

Van Manen (1995) argues that professional practices of educating cannot be properly understood unless we are willing to conceive of practical knowledge and reflective practice quite differently. He quotes Schön (1987) who suggests that professional education undervalues practical knowledge and grants privileged status to forms of intellectual, scientific and rational knowledge that may be only marginally relevant to actual practice. Heath (1998) examines the polarized nature of the debate surrounding reflection and nursing theory and concludes that little is to be gained by maintaining opposing and entrenched views. Rather, she suggests that differing ideas have the effect of sharpening debate.

While a range of opinions continue to flourish as to whether nurse education should or should not be focused on technical proficiency or on more theoretical aspects of the

role, the principle of providing a broad educational base to support the development of reflective practice remains constant. Schön (1983) indicates that the aim of reflective practice is to advance one's thinking at a conceptual level and thus be better able to change at a professional, social and political level. In this way reflective practice can be regarded as an essential learning device to aid an overall strategy of emancipation. This view is consistent also with those held by Garratt (1992) who regards reflective practitioners as being strongly committed to improving their practice. In praxis terms, reflection leads to action and provides an avenue for students to bring together theory with practice in a way that increases self-understanding and self-confidence.

While reflective practice by students of nursing can lead to feelings of empowerment that can support emancipatory action, it is crucial that it occurs within a framework of ethical concern which is compatible with codes of professional ethics. Such codes have been endorsed by the nursing profession through the Australian Nursing Council Inc (1993, 1995) the health professions generally, and are expected by the consumers of health care as outlined so eloquently by Johnstone (1993):

If nurses are to continue their historical quest to hold and protect the interests of health care consumers it is vitally important they not only explicate in practice standards the moral behaviours which individuals, groups and communities are entitled to expect of nurses, but also put in place mechanisms which will assist and protect nurses in the ethical practice of their profession. (p. 11)

Throughout most of the student journals evidence was found of personal changes that had occurred as a consequence of combined life and university experiences along with the effort that many had made to critically reflect on their experience. The detailed, honest and plural perspectives gathered from student journals regarding their responses to the learning experience, has enabled me to gain a depth of insight into the value of implementing a critical pedagogy within simulation-based learning that I could not otherwise have gained.

Assessment of reflection skills

My long-term involvement with various forms of student assessment has left me convinced that critical learning processes should be assessed and given prominence in undergraduate studies. Assessments used in traditional classroom approaches can test student knowledge, comprehension and even analysis and synthesis. However, personal growth as a result of education is often observed by individual teachers but rarely assessed. As part of the critical pedagogy used in this instance, students were

prompted and guided to examine all aspects of people and society, even those that are unpleasant, and to identify the dynamics of power and politics that may alter the range of available options for certain individuals and groups. The teacher role in such an environment is part of the learning interaction and therefore cannot be claimed to be neutral in terms of what is reflected upon or made the subject of critique. In some journals students did indeed comment on my views, approaches and behaviour and proceeded to analyse these as part of their critique of the simulation.

Assessment of reflective journals is a point of contention among teachers and the quandary for me was to find a way of giving prominence to critical reflection in a way that students would appreciate. The students who studied with me during this subject had previously reflected on critical incidents as non-assessed learning activities in previous subjects but, because these reflection activities were not assessed, students perceived them to be of less value than activities that contributed to their formal assessment. I therefore needed to allocate some assessment points to the critical reflection that I believed was so central to the learning experience.

Having accepted the need to apply assessment to reflective journals, I was careful to focus assessment on the intellectual skills demonstrated therein rather than any personal content of the entries. My contribution was to provide verbal and written guidance about the types of reflection that could help the learning process. Details of the guidance given to students is provided in Appendix B.

In assessing the journals it was important to distinguish between the personal content of reflections and the intellectual ability that was occurring. The content really did not have a lot to offer the process of personal development but the way in which student thought about the topic was of utmost significance. Following a search of published sources on critical reflection, the criteria for finding evidence in journals of intellectual operations, critical analysis and insight that was finally constructed to guide assessment. Details of the criteria applied to the assessment of journals are provided in the Appendix.

Weighting was given to student observations that question, criticize and re-formulate assumptions about nursing, people and any issues arising from these assumptions. Schön (1983) describes this type of thinking as reflection-in-action and relates it to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and concepts necessary for us to feel in control of our own circumstances. Such reflection can develop from conscious activity to where it

becomes part of our general approach to gathering life experiences and then critically reflecting upon them to find meaning.

Dewey (1933) categorizes different ways of thinking and these concepts were useful, with some adaptation, in devising part of the assessment of intellectual operations within the reflective journals as shown below.

'Routine thinking' is the opposite of reflection and is a continuation of institutionalised attitudes and ideas, based on tradition and deferent to authority. A typical approach in this category would be a focus merely on getting the project finished according to the minimum criteria rather than being innovative and striving for excellence.

'Rational thinking' is dependent on organisation of information, logic and validation of facts. It uses an approach commonly used in empirical analyses and depends on careful research and deductive reasoning without involving external views on the subject or allowing for contextual influences. Dewey claims that these first two forms of knowledge are devoid of producing something that a person would be willing to act upon because there is no automatic intellectual and practical commitment to the context in which the person exists.

'Intuitive thinking' is reflective thinking that allows for imagination, emotion, integration and synthesis of material, holistic perceptions, sensitivity and understanding. It is expected to be non-judgmental while allowing for examination of all facets of the phenomenon, and leading to consequences and actions.

Dewey suggests that this last category causes an unsettling phase of doubt with hesitation and perplexity followed by searching and inquiry to find material to help resolve the doubts. But it is more than problem solving, it is emancipating when it generates intelligent action.

Habermas (1973) regards reflection as knowledge that is non-neutral in that it has historical roots and serves particular interests. The application of reflection skills to particular situations can generate insights within a range of complexity outlined below, which has at the uppermost level, that of critical reflection.

'Technical reflection' or problem solving, involves the application or implementation of existing knowledge to the attainment of given outcomes. This technical-rational type of thinking results in instrumental action. Evidence within the student journals would be seen if the major focus is concern with controlling the project to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness. While it serves those who have control of situational

resources it does little to enhance different and creative ways of approaching a situation.

'Practical reflection' or social conscience involves anticipating and clarifying assumptions that drive practical activities. It involves consideration of moral, ethical and value aspects of what is happening within the process of group work. At this level of reflection, actions are linked to personal values and reflection addresses the moral aspects of decisions taken and the comparative worth of goals.

These two first categories lead to interpretive understanding but fall short of explaining the social context or results of constraints and limitations imposed by external structures.

'Critical reflection' or emancipation, includes the practical reflection aspects of the first two types of reflection, but extends them to examine the interactions with the larger context and the distorting consequences on structural forces and constraints in the practice setting. This type of knowledge encompasses revelations about oneself and an understanding of self and others.

Habermas (1973) argues that undistorted communication can only be achieved once the alienating aspects of practical knowledge and communication are removed. He claims that communication that goes beyond subjective meaning facilitates social action and interaction that allows for development of autonomy and personal freedom. Critical perspectives such as these allow professionals and others to articulate and then eliminate conditions that frustrate and constrain self-understanding and open the way to emancipation. In the past there has been a strong inclination for nursing knowledge to focus on describing, explaining, predicting and controlling from an empirical perspective. Therefore any processes that encourage nurses to be more aware of the meaning of behaviour and text may also enable them to take action to change it.

The importance of encouraging students of nursing to develop critical intellectual skills relates to the work that they will undertake in the nursing workforce following graduation. Within three years at university, students must take on the role and responsibilities of a professional nurse while accepting that the results of a wrong decision are possible to be measured in terms of the human misery caused by the error. Students in the final year are very aware of such consequences and they experience the entire gambit of stress responses to their impending graduation and employment as professionals. The level of personal growth and change that this critical

pedagogy is designed to promote will be demonstrated by the graduate nurses who are able to go beyond the core beliefs of their group and criticize, restructure and test claims made about all aspects of health practice and management. The task for teachers is to find ways to assist students to learn how to cope with such diversity and responsibility. Though difficult to achieve, when students believe they have benefited from an innovative pedagogical strategy there is some teacher satisfaction to be gained.

Reflection on the essential components of the simulation

Over the years of my involvement with students who experienced the simulation I carefully monitored the various elements of the learning situation so that the process could be further refined. The simulation did not occur every year even though the Community Development Nursing subject remained part of the undergraduate program. During the years when this simulation was not included in the subject educational strategy, the theoretical content of the subject was similar and involved group projects presented within the community. The significant difference was that students were not expected to organize or manage the projects themselves, nor to establish their personal profile within the tutorial groups, or vie for election to chair the weekly meetings. Their focus was directed to group work for which the majority of assessment points were allocated. These modifications stabilized the learning environment and removed the competitive elements of student activity so that the project became the primary focus of student collaboration in tutorial groups where students chose the tutorial groups they wanted to be in.

The effect of stabilizing the student groups reduced the competitive environment but also there was a reduction in opportunities for reflection on personal development and group interaction where there was little evidence of student daring, courage and political activity. Students who took the subject without the simulation had a relatively quiet learning experience while still producing a worthwhile community service as part of their studies.

Having been involved with both educational approaches in the same subject, I am in a position to gauge the overall success of the simulation in terms of student gains on personal and professional levels. Apparent benefits to students of building self-confidence and skills in project and team management as well as learning to lead others under challenging circumstances, validate the critical pedagogical approach taken in theoretical and practical components of the course.

I believe that the teaching and learning strategy could be beneficial in any undergraduate degree program. Because the strategy requires considerable investment of student and teacher time and energy, I would recommend that the approach be used only during the final year of professional degrees and not for all subjects. I would also suggest that it be implemented only if the teacher is prepared to provide support that students require, but in a way that enables students to resolve their own dilemmas and conflicts. My recommendation that the simulation be incorporated in the final year of any professional degree relates to the overwhelming feedback from students, that this was a worthwhile opportunity that prepared them to confidently enter the health industry work environment. The simulation involved more than the accumulation of information about an area of theory. It enabled students to develop and refine leadership and management skills and to critically assess their own attitudes and behaviours in relation to what could be expected of a professional person in similar circumstances.

Therefore, if this simulation were to be implemented by others, I would recommend that consideration be given to including the following elements which I believe generated the development opportunities able to be achieved by students through this critical educational strategy.

The critical aspects of the simulation are:

Equal disadvantage.

The environment needs to be set up so that all students enter the simulation on an equal basis in terms of having to deal with uncertainty and to learn something quite new. This can be accomplished through the introduction of a system of rules and language that all students need to master; and random allocation to work groups to break down dependency on prior social relationships so that they can learn to work well with people whom they do not already know.

Acknowledgement and transparency.

The projects are quite large and will only succeed if all students contribute equally to the effort. Some way is needed to ensure that all work done by students is acknowledged while those who do not contribute are unable to hide their lack of involvement within the group effort. As well, all students need to play a part in the project and be prepared to have their work peer reviewed by other students. By bringing transparency to the process students learn to evaluate their own work and that of their colleagues.

Reward achievement.

Recognition should be given to those who lead and manage and those who perform valuable work. All students need encouragement to attempt leadership roles and to strive for standards of work that will achieve recognition. An environment where students can observe those in leadership roles and critically assess their own potential to take on leadership responsibility can be set up if the benefits of taking on responsibility and extra work are understood by all involved.

Critical analysis through reflection.

Reflective journals were used in this simulation and through written reflection with periodic guidance and general discussion about journaling, students were able to apply their critical analytical skills to what they observed about the learning experience. Students need to analyse what is happening and use that analysis as a basis for action. The agendas that students choose to follow are less important than the process of taking a moment to consider what has happened and to analyse this in terms of what action now needs to be undertaken to improve the situation.

Student support.

There needs to be a commitment by the teacher to being available for individual and group consultations concerning activities arising within the simulation. Attendance at all formal committee meetings and forums helps the teacher to anticipate learning needs; identify situations that might pose a serious risk to students; and to take steps to moderate the risk rather than remove the threat. Where students have problems that extend beyond the simulation appropriate referrals to counselling and systematic supports are needed.

I discovered that an important aspect of teacher responsibility within a critical educational strategy is to encourage all students to reach a position where any dilemmas they face are at least manageable and at best, resolved. Very few students required my assistance with this aspect of the experience and for those who did, being able to speak openly to me about their perceptions of what was occurring was perceived as helpful. Students also found their journals to be of value in assisting them to reflect critically about their concerns in a way that led to strategic action. By the end of the simulation, most students achieved resolution of the conflicts that they had experienced in the heat of competition and, in many cases, new friendships and professional relationships were forged.

Issues in setting up the simulation

The use of simulation as a teaching approach is not a new idea and had been promoted long before adopted it as part of my educational strategy. My intention was to implement a simulation of the health industry environment as a way of introducing the 'turgid ambiguity' so eloquently described by Chickering (1969) as cited by Bevis and Murray (1990):

Structuring curriculum around sets of criteria for teacher-student interactions that support emancipation, education, caring and criteria for devising or selecting learning activities that are reality-based and lead to insights, engagement, dialogue, inquiry and meaning-making, shifts nurse educators from the surety of the formula-driven behaviourist curricula currently in vogue to one of turgid ambiguity. (p. 330)

Kanapol (1992) and Sikes (1997) also advocate engaging students in the practical concerns of everyday work-life as a means of enabling them to define their own responses to such phenomena as authoritarianism, gender and other types of dominance, fear and cheating, stereotypes and competition which can affect the quality of their work environments. By simulating a competitive environment it was hoped that students might develop an ability to question ideological dominance arising from cultural, political and value-oriented dogma within the contexts of professional practice.

My earlier conjecture, about the benefits to nursing from increased numbers of nurses with credible leadership skills, invigorated my resolve to assist students to enter the nursing workforce well prepared for the bureaucratic, political and leadership aspects of their professional role. I believed that I could create a simulation of the pressures associated with the health system environment that would enable students to engage with a learning experience that built on their strengths and helped them master any weaknesses. If the simulation was found to be a worthwhile education strategy then I believed it would go some way toward preparing graduates for the 'turgid' environment of professional nursing work.

The simulation provided students with opportunities to consolidate their prior learning as well experience formal committee processes and all the accompanying constraints of bureaucratic procedure and jargon. Further new opportunities were made possible for students to perceive themselves in leadership roles and to feel what it was like to exercise power and control over others as well as being subjected to power and authority themselves. In order to maximise the feeling of entering a novel situation,

most of the long-established student groups were dismantled, enabling students to learn in a new situation with new colleagues.

The competitive aspects of situations in which they may want to practice needed to be part of the simulation so that students learned to identify the relatively hidden connections between professional practice and society. Once students achieved a useful level of insight into group interactions under competitive influences, I expected that they might want to act strategically to ensure that their own interests were preserved. Ultimately I hoped that these insights and skills would help students to secure employment in organisations of their own choice, and then to assert their own preferences or priorities within their workplaces and deliver high standards of nursing services to their clients and patients.

Issues of risk amelioration

Overt competition and professional dilemmas arising from competing priorities is not usually part of undergraduate studies in professional degrees even though on a daily basis, competition and its related dilemmas form part of the health services environment. In the simulation, competition was engendered through an assessment system that rewarded individual as well as group effort. It was hoped that in this way, students would benefit from direct experience of the effects of politics and competition in a relatively safe environment. Students were able to observe, discuss and reflect on their experiences and thereby develop competence in analysing situations and taking their own effective action to resolve problems. The simulation which formed the basis of this critical education strategy encouraged students to extend their perceptions about nursing roles, well beyond the anticipated challenges of the clinical nurse role. Through engagement with the broader industrial and professional issues around nursing and the contexts in which nursing occurs, it was not surprising that for many students the experience was at times, stressful.

The details of how the simulation was set up and conducted are provided In the Appendices to this thesis however, it is worthwhile at this point to clarify how student support systems were set up to prevent and/or respond to issues arising from potential dilemmas faced by some students.

Many of the challenges anticipated for students who participated in this simulation were related to practice-based problems that could cause anxiety as to how they could be resolved. In searching for ways to ameliorate risks to students I discovered the work of

Baskett and Marsick (1992). They claim that both performance change and practice-linked outcomes, incorporate professional, personal, social and environmental factors, and facilitates networking with both experts and peers. I realized that as students learned to more skilfully engage with stress and anxiety, my role as teacher would need to change from emotional support to that of modelling cognitive approaches to situations that may be complex or poorly defined, and finally I hoped they might come to regard me as a colleague with some expertise in teaching.

At no time was the simulation intended to pose moral dilemmas for the students but they were not denied the experience of other professional dilemmas. A valuable part of the experience was to encourage students to find professionally acceptable ways to respond to dilemmas arising from competitive and political situations. My role would be assist students through the process. A concept analysis of 'dilemma' published by Sletteboe's (1997) identified certain defining attributes of professional dilemmas which I was able to incorporate into the simulation planned for the students. These are:

- (i) engagement, as indicated in the simulation by the requirement that students participate in the group project as part of their studies;
- (ii) equally unattractive alternatives, involving the possibility of students gaining lower participation marks if they did not get involved compared with having to make a personal commitment to do the work if they did get involved;
- (iii) awareness of alternatives, which in this instance included students withdrawing from the subject, moderating their commitment, calculating the visibility and effect of their own performance in relation to that of other students in the group, and competing for recognition;
- (iv) need for a choice, was apparent from the very beginning of the simulation when students were confronted with the need to decide on how they would respond to the challenges set for them; and
- (v) an uncertainty of action, which arose for students through the unfamiliar approach to structuring group work along with the jargon and protocols associated with formal committee environments.

Essentially the risk amelioration strategy associated with this learning environment involved providing multi-level support for students and included:

1. tutors being present at the large committee meetings
2. open discussion held at forums about professional dilemmas and possible strategies to resolve them

3. I was available for extended private consultations with individuals and groups of students who needed to discuss their problems or their reflective journals.

Individual students occasionally experienced particular difficulties arising from their personal lives and extra support and encouragement was provided by me or through referral to other student support systems, to assist them to fulfil the requirements of the subject and to extract what benefits they could from the simulation experience.

Issues of trust

The simulation generated conditions where competition and political activity had the potential to create an environment in which uncertainty prompted caution and reflection on issues of trust. The general unpleasantness of organisational abuses of trust is a difficult concept to teach and to learn. But in order that students might become aware of the occurrence and consequences of such a situation, a learning environment based on trust is needed where they can hear about it, perhaps even observe it, reflect on it and take steps to work around it.

As part of my own reflexive processes, I considered whether trust was precluded by the competitive and political environments that were central to the simulation experience. As a professional nurse with several decades of practice in many different contexts, I am aware that the health care system can use the deployment of trust as part of the management of uncertainty in the complex environment in which health services are delivered. For instance, informal leaders within the workforce can be made aware of management agendas and plans so that these people can help to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty among their colleagues and thereby foster widespread acceptance of management plans. Gilbert (1998) refers to Luchmann's neo-functionalist analysis of trust relationships between systems and their environments. In Luchmann's view modern societies tend towards increasing complexity and this amplifies levels of uncertainty and risk, bringing with it the danger of crippling anxiety. If trust is used as a strategy to manage uncertainty and ambiguous situations, then it is essential that those who propose the notion that trust be placed in those who are gate keeping, be trustworthy.

The preparation that students in professional degrees receive prepares them for a range of skills, interventions and strategies that are related to establishing public confidence in their ability to do what they claim. Clinical nurses operate on the level of interpersonal trust between themselves and patients and with their colleagues, but

also, on a less personal level, nurses use their communication skills to establish a trust relationship with the health system and the general public, that will attract status and respect. Trust therefore can become a mechanism within the power relations of the health professions and on this basis alone, the tension between trust, competition and conflict is readily apparent.

The proposition put forward by Gilbert (1998) is that trust, rather than being a neutral and benevolent concept, is manufactured within the social relationships of health care enabling resources to be claimed and distributed, and particular opportunities to be created or excluded. He further claimed that trust could have quite different connotations within the discourse of a client advocacy group than within the discourse of professions.

Some people may not have had opportunities to develop sufficient self-confidence and self-esteem to be able to trust easily, even on an interpersonal level. In such situations, according to Gilbert (1998) the result is powerlessness, where there is no choice, just hope, which differs from the experience of abuse in terms of the nature and degree of the alienation engendered by lack of trust. He also quotes Giddens (1993) who claims that the capacity of an individual to trust is considered to be the result of a developmental process and as such is viewed as essential to the development of self-identity. Therefore for trust to develop people need to be capable of trusting and unless interpersonal forms of trust have been experienced, it is unlikely that more complex forms of trust that allow for tension to exist, will be possible.

Part of the development of political awareness by students relates to them being able to decide on the wisdom of embarking on either interpersonal or impersonal trust, or both. In the health care system there is a level of social control over the impersonal trust that is used to manage uncertainty within the complex system and the extent to which this control is exerted depends on the extent of mistrust within the organisational culture.

Those engaged in professional education could be regarded as being 'guardians of trust' described by Gilbert (1998) as the people who regulate and monitor the overall performance of the system and those involved in it. Some people, often selected from certain professional groups, can become the monitors and overall managers of trust as it is performed by others. For example, nurses take care not to undermine a patient's trust in physicians, and nurses expect that the same care to preserve trust in nurses is reciprocated. A further example is the reliance by some managers on certain people in

organisations to provide them with useful information that will assist in the formulation of management decisions. The trust that is built up between manager and informant in these situations is often based on anticipation by both parties of future rewards. Unfortunately this arrangement can lead to the development of social networks that ultimately threaten to distort the information that is made available. These distortions can arise as a result of a shift of trust from a merit-based relationship to one that is personalized. The complications that arise when an impersonal system of trust is converted to one based on a social relationship can include the growth of mistrust by those outside the social relationship. There is also a potential for trust to be abused by those who regulate and monitor the performance of others but who do so in a personalized way.

During times of uncertainty it is difficult to trust organisational and professional systems that seem to change and adapt to forces outside the understanding and influence of health professionals employed to deliver clinical and other health services. Even so, trust is a crucial element in being able to cope with change. It is through the establishment of trust relationships with other colleagues, one's employer and the clients or patients who seek assistance and treatment that one is able to manage conflicting demands and act with certainty.

Every student who wanted to be involved, could use the simulation in order to develop an awareness of trust and equity issues and to question the many social and professional structures and roles that surround nursing. Professional education is a process through which people can gain skills in particular interventions in service of the community, and also in a range of strategies that relate to generating an image of reliability, efficacy and accountability. Such strategies draw upon skilled communication, the ability to organize others and the confidence to compete with others who might appear powerful. I believed that all students, given an opportunity to take a critical approach to their studies, could succeed in learning to lead others.

One of the many rewards available through successful competition is the generation of a public impression of trustworthiness. As Gilbert (1998) states:

The proposition is that trust, rather than being a neutral and benevolent concept, is manufactured within the social relationships of health care. This enables resources to be claimed and distributed, it also enables particular opportunities to be created or excluded. Trust is therefore a mechanism within the power relations of caring. (p. 1010)

It was my contention that for the self-confidence and self-esteem needed if such trust were to be possible, personal experiences of successful competition, positive encounters with complex organisations and an understanding of competition and political behaviour among the various political stakeholders in that environment needed to occur.

It was crucial that issues of justice and equity apply throughout all aspects of the learning experience but without exerting such a moderating effect on the simulated pressures that the experience became banal or pointless. It was precisely the achievement of these teaching goals that encouraged me to repeat this critical education strategy for over four hundred final year undergraduate students between the years 1993 -1999.

Of paramount importance was the safety of the students and for the simulation to provide the learning opportunity I hoped to achieve, my interpretation of what was safe incorporated some discomfort. In other words, my obligation to student safety included accepting that there would be emotional and intellectual discomfort associated with the processes of personal growth and change, and that I needed to be available to support and guide any students who found the experience unbearable.

There is no doubt from the evidence provided through student journals, that many of them did experience stress at different times. However, I ensured that all had access to information, support and mentorship that could assist them to analyse what was happening so they could think strategically about ways in which they could use the situation to progress their own agendas. This meant that as teacher, mentor, referee, confidant, ally and friend, depending on the student's needs, my responsibility was to facilitate the simulation in a way that was both realistic and safe, as well as aligning with the expectations of my own codes of professional ethics in teaching and nursing.

The strategy involved a critical approach to all aspects of the content and processes associated with the learning experience as well as any conceptualisations they had formed of themselves as nurses and me as a teacher. When this learning experience was implemented for the first cohort of students, I quickly realised that simulating an environment buffeted by competition, politics, resource scarcity, accountability and bureaucratic rules would be unsettling for all concerned, not just the students. My goal was to live up to the trust students placed in me to make sure that the level of personal stress involved, did not exceed the pressure that they could face as beginning professionals once they entered the workforce.

In order that I might facilitate the development of students who experienced the simulation I was well aware that a climate of mutual trust needed to be established and maintained between me and the students. The type of trust relationship that I sought to incorporate into the simulation was akin to that described by Cross (1996) in her analysis of the term 'facilitation' which I regarded as a major part of my role in this learning strategy. Cross identifies the attributes of facilitation as:

a process enabling change; a climate for learning (mutual trust, acceptance and respect); and factors which relate to the nature of the process (student-centred, negotiated and collaborative). The antecedents relate to the facilitator qualities (realness, caring and empathy); access to a learning situation and the effects of motivation and social influences; the consequences of effective facilitation being reciprocal change (learning and understanding), reciprocal feedback and increased independence. (p. 350)

Cross claims that teachers as facilitators need to be self-aware and able to accept and trust the students with whom they will build understanding and empathy. Fundamentally, students trust that the learning opportunities that teachers invite students to experience, will be relevant to the course of study. Students also trust that they will be able to participate and be involved in their own education in a way that is meaningful to them. Also, students expect that the teacher also invests in the success of the teaching and learning process. In this instance, my interests as teacher and facilitator were to equip students to enter an uncertain industrial environment and not be deterred by the pressures therein. By learning the processes of reflection and critical analysis students, I believed, would be less likely to rely on static knowledge and thereby become self-determining, confident professionals with the capacity to critically analyse their environments and to take up leadership roles therein.

I had established a trust relationship with the majority of students during earlier subjects I had taught for them in the program. However, in this instance I was asking them to share with me an experience that was quite innovative and from which I hoped to learn as much as they. As the purpose of the simulation and the potential for learning for all who decided to get involved was expounded during the first lecture most students realized that ultimately it was up to each of them whether or not they accepted me in a participant learner role and regarded the simulation as a valuable learning opportunity.

For my own part, I had to accept that students could reject the learning opportunity, and also I needed to accept that there may be limitations in terms of what I might accomplish and learn as a result of this critical educational strategy.

Group work within project committees and working with others to reflect on problems and to resolve conflicts also required elements of trust if it was to work as well as I hoped. In a group situation such processes can be threatening, particularly if particular members of the group are exposed to critical comments, challenge or confrontation by other members of the group. The advantages of structured reflection in groups as a means of enhancing professional practice have been put forward by Pask (1995) and Graham et al (1998) and all regard reflection as a process involving an interplay of observation and reflection that can lead to different perspectives and enable us to challenge values, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, theories, policies and accepted ways of doing things. As the committees settled into the process of developing their projects, confidence in committee procedure increased as did their ability to articulate divergent opinions. Still, the process can be uncomfortable.

Throughout the learning experience the role of teacher in these groups was that of a trusted observer who was there to offer support and encouragement and to be available to individual students who needed extra help in dealing with pressures arising from the simulation. The committee groups would not have become such a valuable learning environment had the teacher or tutors established themselves as group leaders. Some students interpreted the minimal-intervention role of teachers as an abdication of their authority and from time to time, were critical of me when I deliberately absented myself from certain groups that had a tendency to depend on me for direction. Far from this being a breach of trust, I facilitated the simulation to enable students to explore their own experience through critical reflection and so learn how to gain both knowledge and a deeper understanding of themselves and how they would take on the role of a professional nurse. In fact, not offering advice was quite difficult at times.

The last major area involving trust relates to the reflective journals kept by students to help them learn from the experience. The reflective processes that students were encouraged to adopt required them to participate fully and commit themselves to the process. Sometimes the intensity with which students undertook to journal their thoughts and analyses of what was happening made them relatively vulnerable yet the evidence provided in subsequent chapters of this thesis indicates that students did believe that they could write and reflect on anything arising out of the simulation. Many openly shared their insights as to changes they felt were happening and also the disappointments and frustrations that the simulation generated. Student vulnerability was shared in many ways because they all kept journals.

The trust they placed in me when submitting their journals went further than simply trusting that I would treat them confidentially. Students also trusted that I would read their journals to find the meaning they applied to their experiences and not look for evidence of regurgitated content derived from lectures and texts. To bring balance to the trust relationship I was also aware of the need for me to be open with students in terms of my own thoughts and feelings on any experiences that I had, even those that made me more vulnerable to criticism. As a result a shared dialogue based on trust emerged and students had an opportunity to revise their relationship with me as they drew close to graduation.

While Pierson (1998) presents strong views on the role of teachers in engendering a sense of trust so that students can feel safe enough to share their experiences, she suggests that the topics covered need to be brought to a natural conclusion and that the outcome of covering a variety of topics quickly and without sufficient depth leads to calculative thinking. In the simulation in which students were using reflection, there was no pre-set list of topics to be covered and in fact it was possible for students to focus on a single aspect that interested them, and still satisfy the requirement that they reflect critically on that issue. Pierson concludes that there is a paucity of literature related to actual outcomes of reflection and no suggestion that those who reflect actually function differently as practitioners, however in this research, the evidence of personal transformation that students documented in the journals which form the basis of this research, are in themselves very persuasive.

Chapter 3: Research opportunity and approach

It is important to explain that the critical pedagogical strategy referred to in this thesis was set up to prepare graduates for entry into the tough-minded, competitive professional environment of Australian nursing. Because of this, students were not the objects of the research but rather they were part of the student and teacher learning situation. My own initial values motivating the pedagogy were associated with goals related to emancipation of nurses from historically entrenched social and pedagogical expectations about nurses. While not overtly stated, nurses were being prepared to work in a way that is subordinate to other health professionals and expectations were that they should be socialized through their education to accept their status without question (Kincheloe 1994). It is not surprising that all involved with the pedagogy were affected in some way by their personal reflections on issues such as self-perception, credible leadership, management competence and personal transformation and it was these processes of change that I thought worthy of research.

The pedagogical processes discussed above, which combined critical pedagogy and professional educational approaches posed an interesting challenge for me in determining a research methodology. From the outset I was interested in the experiential and reflexive aspects of the research which drew upon my personal involvement in the critical pedagogy as well as the students' interpretations of what was happening in the learning environment. In order to align with critical research perspectives I took care to be explicit throughout the teaching and research processes about my own values and those of the nursing profession that were fundamental to the undergraduate degree subject that was the target of this research. I was aware that critical pedagogy research literature (Lather 1986; Shor 1992; and Foley 1994) delineates between ideological positions taken by researchers with the majority falling within the categories of being openly ideological, being committed to a relatively covert political position, and making an overt display of one's politics. Even so, on issues related to research bias, Carspecken (1996) notes that a researcher's orientation, even in openly ideological research, may not necessarily reflect the values that are reported in research findings if the research is epistemologically sound.

My primary focus for research arising from students' experiences was to investigate the processes that built undergraduate student capacity for leadership. My long-term interest in the various ways simulation could be used in teaching and learning led me to try to discover whether the critical pedagogy I had devised was both plausible and

useful in promoting the development of leadership capacity. My goal for this research was to construct 'a thoughtful tapestry' (Koch 1989) to link ideas of what leadership is about in terms of domination and subjugation, accountability and responsibility and the range of contexts in which the teaching and learning of leadership activity was embedded. My own reflections throughout the teaching processes, and subsequently during critical analysis of the data, have enabled me to gain deeper awareness of the processes that contribute to, or constrain, the development of leadership capacity.

Questions that arose for me as both teacher and researcher were in some respects similar and in others, quite different. Similarities occurred in terms of questioning whether students wanted to be empowered and if so, did they welcome the extra work, pressure and responsibility associated with seizing power. Taking a socially critical approach to teaching and research also involved accepting the social and professional consequences of disturbing the everyday discourses that had become part of their understandings about nursing and the health industry.

Different questions arose for me as researcher in terms of separating the interests of the students, who were learning to be leaders, from my own interests in conducting this research into teaching practice. The simulation-based pedagogy was set up to provide a unique learning experience rather than as a means to research practice however being able to research the learning processes involved was also a unique opportunity.

The research approach that emerged relates closely to the body of research concerning teaching practice within the higher education environment and within the area of critical pedagogy which has developed an extensive body of research and literature in its own right. Gore (1992 and 1993) a proponent of critical pedagogies, identifies the fundamental concern of traditional/positivist pedagogy discourses as focusing on the micro elements of teaching while relegating the radical or critical approaches to the more macro areas of organisational ideology. Issues around the power relationships between teachers and learners as well as notions of institutionalised pedagogies support Gore's claim that social vision alone is insufficient in deciding on what and how to teach, and that instructional practices need to be considered as part of the process of knowledge production. Kanpol (1994) used narrative to ground his theoretical discussions of critical pedagogy and provided a useful place for me to begin considering ways to apply critical pedagogical strategies in the university context and to research its effects on learners.

From the literature it appears that the ontological position of critical pedagogy research falls generally within the qualitative area of critical social science which may or may not lead to critical social theory depending on the assumptions that are made by the researchers. In determining any research approach due recognition needs to be given to the fact that selection of a research strategy is more a reflection of the researcher's values than the identification of the most appropriate technical stratagem. Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe some researchers as taking an interpretive phenomenology approach where the researcher relies on the actors' understanding of what is occurring, while others take a socially critical approach in which the researcher is more involved in the action and attempts to extend understanding in a rational and authentic way. In most instances, both critical pedagogy and professional education researchers acknowledge that people and their learning behaviours are linked to the context, content and the timing of the experience. However, while critical pedagogy research questions the context and the timing associated with the teaching and learning environment, professional education research regards these as part of the professional culture that students are required to adopt along with what is regarded by the profession as immutable content.

Research opportunity identified

With the realization that the simulation-based learning strategy was capable of assisting students to learn and develop as leaders and skilled participants, and that evidence of their development had been captured within their reflective journals, consideration was given to analysing the data they contained. I sought assistance in ensuring that any research conducted on students' work was ethical. My particular concern was to find a socially responsible way of proceeding so that the interests, safety and welfare of all who participate in the research are preserved. The sometimes sensitive nature of the data contained in the student journals meant that in order that no harm come to the participants or those referred to in the journals, the confidences and identities of students needed to be protected. A further ethical concern related to the fact that the journals were being written for the purposes of assessment leading to a mark allocated for a compulsory subject in the bachelor of nursing degree. In this way they provided an opportunity for research that was secondary to the purpose for which students wrote their journals.

I applied for and was granted human research ethics approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee for the use of a specified research protocol

involving 'Analysis of reflective journals kept by students throughout the learning processes involved in NURS325.'

Data collection methods

In all, around four hundred students experienced the critical educational strategy between 1993 and 1998 although not all student cohorts were included in the data collection. In the interests of protecting the identities of students who were included the actual years in which student journals were collected for inclusion in this study have not been revealed.

The process of collecting the journals needed to be one that enabled students to feel confident that their decision to provide or refuse access to their journals would in no way influence their assessment for the subject. This assurance was provided by waiting until students received their final grades before contacting them about the possibility of sharing their journals with me for this research. In order that students were not influenced to write their journals as part of the research, offers of inclusion in the study were not announced until the end of the semester and even then, this offer did not occur every year. Two hundred and twenty nine students, involving three cohorts, were approached during this period and invited to include their journals in the research. Throughout the research period, eleven students declined and their journals were excluded, leaving two hundred and eighteen journals for analysis. The quotations within the thesis were taken from one hundred and two of the journals.

The process used for collecting the journals involved seeking permission from students, at the completion of their assessment for the subject, for their reflective journals to be used to research the effects of the simulation in terms of their response to the experience and the effect it had in terms of professional development outcomes. Each student received a letter outlining ethical considerations and requirements stipulated by the University Human Research Ethics Committee. In that correspondence an undertaking was made to ensure confidentiality and the following provisions put in place to protect the interests of students who participated:

- (i) An outline of the proposed research in relation to their completed subject NURS325.
- (ii) Assurances that their participation or non-participation would have no effect on their final grade for the subject.
- (iii) Measures that would be taken to preserve strict confidentiality in protecting their identity and the identities of any people referred to in their journals.

- (iv) Undertakings that the final report of the study would be based on aggregated perspectives of the processes that they experienced and only excerpts (if any) would be made of their comments provided that these comments did not identify them or any other students.
- (v) Details of the ethics approval for the research granted by the University Human Research Ethics Committee and contact details provided should they wish to confirm any of the above information.
- (vi) My own contact details should they wish to discuss the proposal further.
- (vii) A stamped, return-address envelope and a tear-off slip to be sent to me should they wish NOT to participate in the study, no questions asked.

The broad question at the heart of the research was:

Can simulation-based, critical educational strategies be used to facilitate development of personal, political and management capacity for leadership in undergraduate students of nursing?

In order to investigate this question I needed feedback from the students about their experiences. Given the purpose of the journals which was to reflect on their experiences of the pressures which simulated those of contemporary political and professional environments of the Australian health care system, I assumed that the students' entries would provide indications of the ways in which they had responded to the various problems and challenges provided through the simulation. This was indeed the case. The student responses were in general very detailed and as far as could be determined, honest. These responses allowed me to identify changes in their understandings of leadership, the ways they dealt with situations and how they managed to work together on their projects. Through their own reflection and observation of others I was thus able to determine how group dynamics shifted and how leaders emerged and, how leadership skills and abilities developed.

Each student submitted around 70 pages of hand-written text which amounts to quite a large data set per case. The combined journals posed obvious problems for data management that needed also to be overcome. Although the amount of data was at first quite daunting, I spent considerable time testing different approaches to analysis so as to not risk losing the vibrancy of the text. Finding a way to incorporate their insights and perspectives about the learning experience was difficult and I was determined that all two hundred and eighteen journals would be included in the analysis even though not all would be directly quoted.

Having provided students with their subject grades and having received their permission to use the journals in this research, the journals were copied and the originals posted to the students' home addresses. Copies of the journals were de-

identified and the key and copies stored separately and securely where only I could gain access. At completion of the research all copies of journals and the identity key were destroyed.

Macro-analysis of journal data

The challenge of managing and analysing the data from so many detailed journals led me to consider several options. I considered codifying the text under headings of 'events, issues and meanings' however this seemed to fragment the narrative provided by the students and the rich descriptions of personal experience that so many students provided were in danger of being lost. There seemed little alternative but to rely on macro thematic analysis as a means of identifying the prominent themes that emerged from the student journals, and then to further analyse these themes to discover deeper connections between the narratives and also to discover whether the research questions about the outcomes of the teaching strategy could be answered.

The initial approach to data analysis was to utilize computer software designed to facilitate qualitative analysis. The software program, Nonnumerical, Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorising (NUD.IST) was investigated and appeared to fit well with the purpose and also with the volume of data involved. In preparation for this approach, student journals were transcribed through a word processing program, onto a computer. Several problems emerged during this process, aside from the size of the data set. I found that in order to enable NUD.IST to recognise data, any spelling errors and unusual words needed to be standardised and, in most instances, these changes detracted from the flavour of the entries made by students. Some students used diagrams, stickers and cartoons to convey their feelings and insights and these also could not translate to word processing format. Further, the NUD.IST program offered line-by-line or sentence-by-sentence coding that removed fragments of a journal entry and combine it with other fragments that did not really relate to the messages being conveyed by the students. After setting up the data within NUD.IST and multiple attempts at configuring the themes I realised that the method, while certainly reducing the data to a manageable size, was diluting the essence of what the students were telling me about their experiences.

As I read the hand-written journals, patterns of developmental change began to emerge. I constructed a diagram depicting stages and multiple pathways through which students moved as they developed from positions dominated by emotional responses to positions to distinguish a more intellectual engagement with the experience.

Figure 1. Student development processes and stages

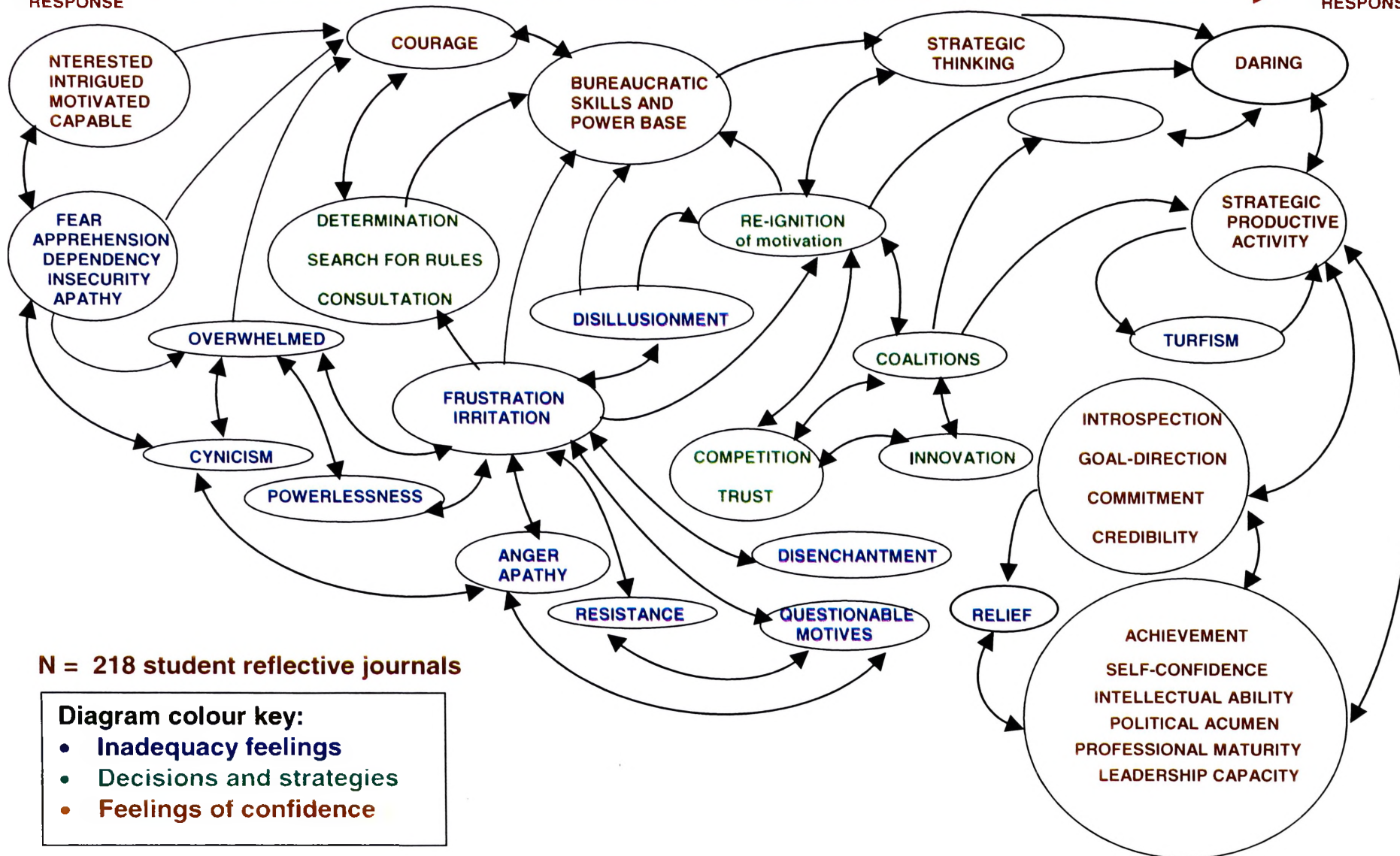
Student responses to critical education strategy using simulation

At commencement Week 1

At completion Week 14

EMOTIONAL
RESPONSE

INTELLECTUAL
RESPONSE



N = 218 student reflective journals

The diagram (Figure 1, previous page) was constructed as a result of multiple readings of the journals and while initially the numbers of students were allocated to the various stages and pathways, I found that quantifying the data detracted from what was essentially a qualitative process of development which, for some students, involved multiple pathways. The diagram conveys the development processes and stages by using circles of different sizes. In this way, there is a suggestion of the proportion of students experiencing particular stages, but these do not overshadow the main message of the diagram which is that there are many pathways through which students moved toward development of leadership capacity.

As the reader moves through the various diagram pathways, it becomes apparent that a small number of students were overwhelmed during the first few weeks of semester but eventually found ways of dealing with the frustration which was preventing them from becoming involved with their colleagues and with the simulation. Over half of the students in the study experienced some negative emotional reaction to the simulation. In many cases, this reaction was nervousness linked to undertaking a new area of study and anxiety about the workload associated with the projects. Many other students indicated that they were intrigued and stimulated by the challenge proposed. The diagram indicates that a few students remained disenchanted until the last few weeks but by the end of the experience the majority reported feelings of self-confidence in their ability to analyse situations, act politically and to lead and work with colleagues in a productive professional way.

Movement through the various positions shown in the diagram seemed to depend upon students being able and willing to re-evaluate of their own abilities to manage and lead, to build self-confidence and self-reliance, to re-assess the place of friendships in professional activities. They needed to analyse political behaviours, strategies and abilities and to examine personal conceptualisations of 'nurse' and 'professional' and, to think strategically about personal achievement.

By incorporating all available student journals in the macro-analysis an overview or contextual framework was constructed that reflected experiences that students thought were important enough to journal. Building on this framework, a second macro-analysis revealed eleven major themes around observations made by students.

The figure overleaf outlines the major themes emerging from the second macro-analysis of the journal data.

Figure 2. Major themes emerging from second macro-analysis

Feeling lost and intimidated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling overwhelmed • Worried about own behaviour • Needing to find courage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried about group behaviour • Reflections on intimidation
The nature of competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opting out • Enjoying the game • Hating the game • Making opportunities • Taking advantage • Individual effort • Team effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about quiet colleagues • Irritated by loud colleagues • Feeling inadequate • Feeling confident • Ethics
Team management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team building • Own behaviour • Meeting management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team commitment • Project management
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural leaders • Natural followers • Learned leadership • Leadership competence • Perceived credibility • Leadership integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough decisions • Courage and resilience • Plausibility of ideas • Pursuit of excellence • Sensitivity to others
Setting up a committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel experience • Daring • Following procedure • Feeling overwhelmed • Strategizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritation • Collegial interaction • Independence
Power and politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of rules • Power base • Power dynamics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power building strategies • Misuse of power
Role expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic rewards • Role definition • Specific roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation • Performance
Critical incidents - Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenged • Inspired • Stimulated • Motivated • Courage and daring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection • Insight • Personal growth • Achievement
Critical incidents - Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenged • Stimulated • Motivated • Courage and daring • Reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight • Personal growth • Achievement
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animosity • Hostility • Enmity • Bitterness • Antagonism • Friendliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern • Support • Collaboration • Competitor • Cohort

Effects of learning experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-political awareness • Self-awareness • Leadership critique • Leadership potential • Professional interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual roles in teams • Leadership skills • Well-prepared for career
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The major themes outlined above (and shown in detail in Appendix D) enabled the temporal aspect of the learning process to emerge. The effects of the simulation over time were important as students focused on developing different skills as they experimented with new strategic links and by mapping the frequency of student reflections over the weeks of the simulation, some insight is gained as to the priority allocated by students to various concerns at different times during the simulation-based learning experience. An example of one of these frequency tables is shown below.

Figure 3. Example of frequency table

Journal entries on Feeling lost and intimidated														
WEEKS:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Feeling overwhelmed	17	4	4	2	4	2	3			1				
Own behaviour	9	6	2	2	7	3	4	2		3	2	2		3
Courage			1	1	1		3	8	5	4			2	3
Group behaviour					1	2	2		1			2		3
Reflections												1		

In the table above, it is possible to see that higher numbers of students mentioned feeling overwhelmed during the initial week but by mid-semester there were few who thought to mention these feelings again in their journals. Interestingly, observations about their own behaviour in terms of responding to the situation as it changed over time attracted a constant level of comment although this too diminished as students developed more confidence. The increased reflection about courage at around mid semester is interesting in that it was around that time that the less outspoken students discovered that they needed to take on leadership roles in order to do well in the simulation and the subject. Interest in group responses and behaviours were not thought worthy of comment until five weeks into the learning experience and even then, only a handful of students thought the topic worthy of entering into their journals.

From time to time, students were prompted to comment on particular aspects of their simulation experiences. For example, in Week five of the simulation a forum discussion on committee roles occurred as scheduled and student attention was drawn to the various formal and informal roles that people take in their groups. Consequently, as can be seen in Table 7 in Appendix D, the number of journal entries on 'role definition' increased dramatically. Similarly, a discussion on the identification of power within groups in Week five generated considerable journal comments, the frequency of which can be seen in Table 6. On the whole, students were encouraged to comment on matters as they became personally significant and thus, some of the variables identified in tables shown in Appendix D did not attract comments for weeks on end. At the end of semester, students were asked if they had gained anything worthwhile from their simulation learning and many of them shared their evaluations during the classroom forum and again in their journals. Consequently, Table 11 in Appendix D shows fifty-three comments on a range of variables that the students thought had occurred. This final burst of reflection on their own development and preparedness for professional careers could also be explained by the simulation occurring at the end of their undergraduate degree and following a full semester of journaling which for some, had become a familiar method of reflecting on their circumstances and aspirations.

The interplay of time and emphasis on different variables throughout the simulation are examined more deeply (below) in the micro-analysis of particular students' journals. The following section gives voice to one hundred and two of these students whose observations and reflections have been selected as examples of the types of events that all of the students experienced as well as representing many of their colleagues' views on what was happening.

Micro-analysis of journal data

Encouraged by this initial analysis of student perspectives of the simulation experience, I began to include my own experiences and more detailed accounts of student experiences in the analysis of what really had occurred during the simulations. As with many education research undertakings, qualitative approaches such as those used in this study located me within the process as participant, researcher and narrator of the story that unfolded. It is therefore appropriate that I include reflections and perceptions as well as any ideas that I had during the process and that what happened is described in the first person.

Having preserved the individuality of the journals, particular student experiences were now able to be analysed at the micro level. While allowing for considerable sensitivity to students' accounts of events as recommended by Corbin (1990), and providing an observational cross-check to further contextualise the account as suggested by Purkis (1994), I focused on excerpts from student journals as coded data. Once this had been achieved I was able to interpret the student accounts in contextual ways that allowed for the inclusion of politics, competition and professional readiness issues when examining the value of this critical pedagogy. Glesne and Peskin (1992) recommend that such an examination needs to exceed the limits of deduction and combine with induction to produce knowledge that is relevant and worthwhile, and that is what I have attempted to achieve.

The research presented here incorporates elements of socially critical approaches to inquiry in terms of the depth and extent of the results along with the meaningfulness to participants, and it represents in a transparent way the interests and involvement of both students and teacher. As well, it brings together the contextual interests of professional nursing, the health industry, the higher education sector and the interests of the general public who will rely upon graduate nurses for proficient treatment, guidance and leadership on community concerns.

At the completion of the research task, I am now in a position to appreciate the cause of some of the difficulties experienced at the beginning of the study. While most of the methodological problems arose from the size of the data, some were attributable to the fact that I too was a participant with the students in this learning experience and the research, and because of this involvement I was reluctant to leave any part of the data out of the analysis. As it turns out, the various analyses that occurred enabled me to become more aware of what the students were telling me and their stories generated several themes relevant to the questions I needed to answer about the teaching strategy. Selection of one or two student voices as examples of what many were saying was also difficult, however it is not possible to present every student's individual views.

In considering the value of the approach for future research, I would recommend that text provided in detailed and cohesive form, similar to that provided by the students who participated in this research, not be fragmented. However, for future research I would maintain more comprehensive field notes to assist in the selection of examples to illustrate particular points. Detailed field notes would also have provided a more

substantial basis for self-analysis regarding the experience of being a participant/observer in the process.

The political, industrial, professional, and teaching contexts that shaped the pedagogy and prompted this research are discussed in the following chapter. In subsequent chapters the voices of students who experienced the pedagogy are heard and analysed leading to a conclusion that by experiencing a simulation-based critical pedagogy, graduates can enter the nursing workforce well-prepared and to 'go where angels have feared to tread.'

Chapter 4: Management skills and ability

The vast majority of students who graduate with a nursing degree will, at some time, work within a complex, bureaucratic organisation. Their first exposure to bureaucratic systems and processes is often stressful and confusing. At the simplest level, formal committees are integral to the running of such organisations and a nurse who may not have the skills to participate effectively in committee processes, may be placed at a political and professional disadvantage. Despite widespread unpopularity of meetings among health professionals, they are an integral part of management in complex organisations such as hospitals and area health services and effective meeting management depends on the capable performance of roles by those who undertake to participate in committees. It was for these reasons that the simulation included formal committees as a core learning experience.

The purpose of meetings is usually outlined under the terms of reference which can be devised prior to setting up the committee, or they can be part of the work that committees undertake in the initial phase of their existence. Many of the responsibilities of committee roles are defined by the terms of reference under which a committee is to operate. In this simulation of formal committees the terms of reference were broadly set and students were then required to further refine them and where necessary, establish role clarity using terms of reference for specific subcommittees.

The very first lecture for this subject enabled students to hear what was expected from them for the semester's work and about the simulation. They were also given an outline of the way their work would be assessed along with a handbook containing helpful guides on committee procedure. Details of information provided to students on assessment and committee procedure are provided in the appendices. Marking schedules for individual work (the journal and individual visibility within the minutes of the meetings) and group work (presentation of the project to the general community target group) were also given to each student. Considerable time was allotted to explaining how group work for the semester would need to be distributed and organized on both individual and group levels. Most students were unimpressed and at first, some did not understand the change in approach to assessment. This prompted a widespread student response, typified by Marilyn and Moira, in their journals.

Marilyn Week 1

Today was my first day back at university. At first I was quite excited, as this is the final part of my degree. I knew I was doing community nursing

this session, but I had no ideas of how the nursing department was going to teach this subject. I am looking forward to doing community nursing - Then I walked into community development nursing! From the title of the topic I thought it was about the role of the community nurse in looking after the sick - boy was I wrong.

Moir Week 1

Well today's lecture about this subject community development nursing seems all very overwhelming. I think I had to pinch myself to find out that I really wasn't dreaming about all of this, but I wished I was. I'm feeling apprehensive about the whole thing. I suppose that is due to never participating in anything like this before. Well I'm definitely nervous about my first meeting. It sounds exciting, yet I don't know whether to look forward to it or not. It seems like a lot of work in such a short time. I've summed up my feelings today as being part of the learning curve, that is you don't enjoy anything until you understand it properly.

At the first meeting:

Chaos!! ...Talk about confusing and I'd done some pre-reading! Well our Chairperson and Secretary were decided before we could all close our mouths. Things were rolling, yet I don't know which direction. It was forward, I'm sure. I was amazed, just as I was beginning to get the idea of how committee's function it ended. Our group formed subcommittee's and I'm in two...and I appointed myself leader of a subcommittee. As usual when I get involved in anything, all of me is in it.

For the majority of students, full realization that something different had been introduced to their course occurred when they arrived at their first scheduled tutorial group. At the first meeting, on the dot of scheduled tutorial time, the tutor closed the doors, walked to the front of the room that had been set up with a small table and two chairs, and announced the commencement of the committee meeting. We then outlined the broad terms of reference, explained our role as advisers only, distributed a basic agenda for the meeting and called for nominations for the chair and secretary positions for that meeting.

Hesitant at first, some students were reluctant to nominate themselves or others for this strange task. In one group, when there were no nominations, I announced that as no one was prepared to manage and record the meeting, we would cancel it and reconvene here next week at the same time. At that, two students volunteered to assume management responsibility. Following the election of the chair and secretary, we tutors went to the back of the room and sat quietly while the meeting got underway.

My role and that of the tutors assisting me, was to model the types of behaviour generally expected in the context of formal committees. The task for us was to establish these one hour tutorial sessions as formal committee meetings and throughout the semester, we acted as meeting procedure advisers to the group. Our

manner and approach was to conduct ourselves formally and speak only through the chair or when invited to offer advice on meeting procedure. It was important not involve ourselves beyond this advisory role in order to support the opportunity each committee of students had to conduct their meetings without interference.

Meeting management

Students who were elected to chair and record the initial meetings were indeed brave and in some cases exhibited considerable daring, calling upon past experience and knowledge of committee work to get them through. For other students it was difficult to participate and the prospect of having to develop up a project and then present it to the community, was daunting. Most students journalled their views on the meetings and these entries are typified by Blaise, who was quite put off by the formality of it all, and Penny, who found the complexity of the group project worrying in terms of the time and energy she would need to apply in order to do well.

Blaise Week 1

My participation was very minimal, this was probably due to not knowing what to really expect from this meeting, as I have never participated in a formal meeting where all of the members have to work towards a common goal. All the formalities seemed to have put me off, where you have to have a chairperson and secretary, with somebody taking down the minutes.

Penny Week 1

The idea of a committee meeting equipped with a chairperson and secretary was something new to me. I had never been involved in something so complicated, or that needed so much time and energy to run... I think these committee meetings are going to take up a lot of time and the organising within subgroups will take up a lot of our spare time. I just hope that I have enough spare time to perform at my best within these groups.

Over the following weeks, most meetings soon settled into a routine, with the agenda for each meeting varied to account for particular group projects and associated subcommittee work. The last permanent item on every agenda was the election of the positions of chair and secretary for the following week. Under the marking scheme, students taking up these management or leadership positions earned an extra two points because of the work involved. The secretary wrote up the minutes and posted them on the notice board set aside for this purpose (the communication board), and assisted the chairperson who presented a verbal account of the committee's work during the previous week to the combined student group (the forum) the following Monday.

The purpose of the forum presentation was to enable students from various groups to hear first-hand how colleagues in other groups were progressing. It was also intended that ideas and problems could be shared in a spirit of collegiality that would facilitate discussion of problems and possible solutions.

Weekly rotation of the committee management team, that is the chairperson and secretary, served several purposes in the simulation. First, it allowed every student who wanted to do so, an opportunity to manage a formal committee as either chairperson or secretary. Second, as student awareness of formal committee processes developed, it enabled them to observe how their colleagues performed in these roles and to reflect on what made some people effective and others less so, when in management roles. Third, the experience of taking on responsibilities associated with chairing or recording the minutes of a meeting and then presenting a performance analysis to the entire class in the forum, created, even for students who found the whole experience distasteful, an environment of critique tempered by empathy for their colleagues. Fourth, these management roles did not automatically go to the established 'leaders' in the groups. So-called 'quieter students' built up skills and courage over the semester and learned that they could not only challenge others for management roles, they could also competently perform the bureaucratic skills associated with those roles.

Within a few weeks of semester, students became more familiar with committee procedures and realized that efficient management of committees was linked to opportunities to gain assessment marks by being mentioned in the minutes. To rate a mention, students could choose to do the work they had been allocated and report on this during the committee meeting, or think of good ideas that they could propose as formal motions that might gain committee endorsement. Alternatively, they could be noticed through the use of formal meeting processes such as seconding someone else's proposal for one mark, or proposing amendments to the initial proposal, or appropriately raising points of information and points of order. It was not surprising therefore that from time to time the meetings became quite rowdy. Harriet's assessment of the group's ability to manage was fairly typical of other groups.

Harriet Week 1

To sum this meeting up, it was a disaster. It was obvious that none of us had any complete idea of what to expect. Those that had obviously been in a formal committee meeting didn't know enough to control the rest of our confusion. We didn't seem to get anything accomplished and seemed to absolutely stay dormant right from the beginning. I think we all had lost the plot before we even started! To get this project together we're going to

need a lot of help and cooperation. Also something needs to be organized very quickly, otherwise we are never going to get anything done.

Everyone today seemed to just throw proposals at each other and try to second other people's proposals just to get points. It seems in this subject that we have to jump on other people to get anything done or to achieve points. This is something that our group really needs to manage, otherwise points will become more important than the actual project. One word to sum up this meeting AUGHH! What have we got ourselves into? All I can see is a lot of work and confusion ahead. Please someone, HELP!

There is no doubt that meetings held during the first week were confusing and disorganized. Don doubted the merits of any approach to managing meetings that encouraged chaos, or which disadvantaged those who were less assertive. Even though he did not count himself among these quieter people, he was worried for them.

Don Week 1

Talking to one of the other students from a different group's subject, he described the first meeting as a pack of dogs fighting for a bone! Everybody wants their name in the stupid minutes, while the secretary tries to scribble out all their names. 'I second that- I second this -' How is this a productive part of this subject? All this seems to do is let the people in the group who are vocal smother the quiet people. I think I will go OK in the subject but I worry about people like... They are just quiet people so I don't think this subject will suit them.

By Week six of the simulation, each student had observed previous chairpersons and secretaries and considered whether their styles of meeting management and approaches to forum presentations had been effective in controlling the committee interactions. The group that Fanny and Millie were attempting to manage was very disorganized due to factional in-fighting and an ongoing struggle for dominance between several colleagues. Naturally, rising to the challenge of managing this committee required courage and stamina as well as taking on an unfamiliar role and acting in ways not normally expected.

Fanny Week 6

In the committee meeting today, Millie handled her position very well. She kept the group under control, and even kept her head above water when personally attacked. I even kept my cool when people were rude enough to laugh at other people's proposals, or mumble rude comments. Apart from this the meeting ran very smoothly, and Millie did a good job, even though the position was not indicative of her personality.

By mid semester many of the more outspoken students had had their turn at managing the meeting and presenting forum reports and it was now time for some of the other students to consider taking on the role. The very first step in this process thought Fanny, was to have a thorough understanding of meeting procedures and finding some

way to overcome the hurdles associated with accurate reporting of the meeting. The second requirement was courage 'under fire.'

Fanny Week 6

One thing that did confuse me was that I was under the opinion that when something was proposed, seconded and not opposed, it stood. This does not seem to be happening, as another student proposed how part of the presentation was going to be presented, and I seconded it. This motion was not opposed, therefore it stood. Even though this motion was carried, the committee was still arguing about how that aspect was going to be presented. This was very frustrating, as it meant that we were continuously going around in circles.

This seems to be the general pattern of all of our committee meetings. Even though we do progress, we don't get very far. Next week Millie is chairperson and I am secretary. This should be interesting as Millie is usually a quiet person and it is going to take a lot to control our group. It should be a little easier for me to get the minutes accurate, as Letitia proposed that each meeting should be taped to assist the secretary in writing up the minutes. I am looking forward to seeing how we both handle our positions, but at the same time I'm not looking forward to being under fire from the rest of the group.

Role expectations during committee management and the forum presentation were covered in a lecture topic presented to each cohort of students undertaking the simulation. Strategies for ensuring that all members of committees and subcommittees had a chance to participate were examined and discussed. These strategies drew heavily on established rules of formal debate and what capable performance of committee roles looked like. These rules enabled students to feel confident in managing the more over-bearing members so that every member of the committee could be heard. John was aware of the effect on meeting management of outspoken people and as he thought about ways to ensure equity, he realized that he was beginning to understand some of the expectations that applied to committee members

John Week 3

By the third meeting everyone in the group was more settled...It was also brought to the attention of the group that there were some over-bearing members who took over discussion and did not allow the rest to participate. It was put forward then, that the quiet members of the group be given a chance to propose and more readily engage in public and or speaking in the group...By this stage I was getting more confident at meetings. I began to understand the structure better and the rules that took place.

Importantly, students were beginning, by Week three, to use committee structures to get things done and to make meetings more productive. For some this raised expectations of chairpersons as the ones responsible for making meetings work. Expectations of chairpersons attracted comment from most students and the question

persisted throughout the groups as to whether quieter students should learn to assert their views in meetings, or whether the chairperson should assist all members to participate. In Marian's opinion, the chairperson should help the quieter voices to be heard.

Marian Week 5

This meeting was far more successful than the previous meeting. I think this was due to the fact that we had an agenda to follow, allowing the chairperson to stick to the agenda thus preventing side discussions... Although the meeting was organized, I thought the quiet people were still not being encouraged to speak. The louder voices still tended to dominate. These quiet people I believe need assertive skills to have their opinion voiced. The chairperson however should have noticed the quiet ones trying to voice their opinions and allowed them to speak. These problems may be resolved as the chairpersons gain an understanding of what is needed.

Effective management of meeting processes enabled students who were not on the management team to earn participation marks. Within committees, protocols that guide interactions as well as clear directions on what is expected in certain meeting roles, let members know how they should behave and also, how others should perform. Group cohesion and productivity depended in large part, on the goodwill of participants and competent management by those chairing and recording the meetings. Some groups had less difficulty with internal competitiveness and lack of cohesiveness than others and there was usually some scepticism that needed to be overcome in order to progress the group's project goals.

As early as the first week of meetings, some students were critical of team behaviours and the performance of other students in management roles even though it was hard for any chairperson to carry out their roles if other members of the committee did not also comply with the protocols. For instance, as one of the students who took up the challenge of committee management in the second week, Hannah found it difficult to perform well in her meeting role because, in essence, she experienced a lack of support from other committee members as she attempted to record the minutes of the meeting.

Hannah Week 2

I was the secretary for today's meeting. It felt daunting because I do not yet feel familiar with the meeting's outline and procedures. I found it extremely hard taking notes on the meeting because every one talks at the same time and cut each other off. I found that when motions were put forward people would second them without an explanation of why, in the hope of having their names mentioned the most in the minutes of the meeting. At times more than one person would second a motion and no names were

mentioned as to who really did second it. This made it extremely hard for me to organize the minutes after the meeting.

Although she knew that people respond differently in a variety of contexts, May was surprised at the disruptive behaviour of colleagues. Her expectations of the committee meetings included an orderly opportunity to get to know the people with whom she would be working even though she had been acquainted with them for two years. Unfortunately their behaviour prohibited such a process and May realized that her opinions about some of her fellow students were in need of review.

May Week 1

The way I saw it was, that the first meeting was a time when we could become better acquainted with one another, even though I'd been to university for three years with these people it had been said 'you never know anyone till you have been in a committee together.' True colours really come out...

Some groups were less disorderly but they still had difficulty in dealing with the agenda because of poor meeting management. In the quote below, Trisha describes the attempts being made by her committee to use the meeting protocols.

Trisha Week 2

I was the secretary and this proved rather difficult as our chairman had very poor control and direction. My theory that poor control over the meeting leads to very little being achieved, was proved correct. Everyone seemed to be on different tangents, and too many proposals were on the floor at the same time. This was extremely frustrating, and made my job particularly confusing. All members were sidetracked on rather irrelevant details which could have been discussed amongst the subcommittee groups out of official meeting times. I left the meeting feeling frustrated, confused, drained and absolutely stranded. However, I do believe our presentation will come together on the day, as it is obvious all members have put a lot of time and effort into their goals which need to be achieved.

Because of the newness of the environment and the skills and rules of procedure students needed to understand in order to succeed in this subject, more detailed information crucial to their committee participation, was given to students during lectures.

Within a few weeks of semester and throughout the student groups, advantages in mastering the rules and skills of formal committee management became well accepted. Some journal entries on team management within a committee during these early weeks took on an optimistic and analytic tone as students tried to understand what was causing the problems that seemed to be plaguing committee meetings. Emily also searched for understanding as to why her project team was not working well. In a meeting with several students who shared her concerns, the administrative problems

affecting their committee were discussed in the hope of finding a solution. Her assessment of the problem was that students were less constrained and more productive within an informal meeting situation where there was no competition for profile.

Emily Week 2

An informal meeting was held today to iron out our administration problems. I thought it was to be conducted in the same manner that a formal meeting would be so as to increase our efficiency and thus our confidence. It wasn't! As a group we worked more coherently and effectively without the constraints of the 'point system' and formality.

The option to rely on previously established informal networks to get essential work done was not available to all students as many had not taken steps to establish such relationships while at university. As well, the use of informal meetings was less likely to assist students to gain formal recognition for their work because of the way the simulation was set up and assessment marks for the project allocated only to work that had been acknowledged through the formal committees.

In terms of bureaucratic skills development, decision-making is a central part of team management responsibility and student decision-making about the project provided significant challenges that involved overcoming self-interest and developing a consensus view that could support their goals. Some theoretical information was provided in student handbooks and during lectures regarding different types of decision-making processes, and the advantages and disadvantages of each approach as it related to the outcome as well as the potential commitment of participants to that outcome. For Tina the entire process of decision-making was frustrating and she was irritated by the ineffectiveness of a chairperson who failed to direct debate and exercise control over group meetings.

Tina Week 1

Although the first meeting was productive I feel it took too long to come to a group decision. There was much discussion about the topic and looking back, I suppose speculation about the whole concept was time consuming and really useless as we had had no correspondence with the community organisation and therefore the discussion I feel had no real bearing in this first meeting. I feel that perhaps the chairperson should have had more control over the direction of the meeting as everyone was saying the same thing but in different ways. There was no possible answer to the issues as we had not had any correspondence from the community organisation!

Looking back, the whole committee lost its focus on the task at hand such as organising subcommittees and in doing so wasted valuable time. There was too much waffle about 'what if' even though it was interesting it was also frustrating and got everyone wound up in speculation!

In other groups, decision-making processes were also frustrating for students who wanted less debate and more action. Eliza clearly enjoyed the efficiency of a show of hands to truncate discussion.

Eliza Week 6

As a final point to this entry I would like to comment on voting and its place in our committee meetings. I find it absolutely amazing that we can spend up to 20 minutes discussing and sometimes arguing a topic and then somebody will propose a vote and then once the vote has taken place and decision made everyone does not mention it again! The issue is resolved. Sometimes I wish we could vote on issues more often as that seems to be the only way to make any logical progression on actions... An example is that of the actual presentation content and its format for the day. This is so often discussed but we never seem to make any solid decision. A solution I thought of was simply take a vote. Do we want speeches, an expo, or activities? Let's have some real action. Lets vote on it!

In most instances there was evidence in the first few weeks that changes were occurring and that progress was being made in developing the group cohesion needed to complete the projects. Every group of students used committee meetings as opportunities to express their ideas and sometimes discussions wandered away from the core business of the project committee. Even so, progress was being made and Tina's entry encapsulates the changes occurring across the student groups.

Tina Week 2

Whether it was due to 'past experience' or not, the committee functioned more effectively than last week. The Chairperson was in control and the members I feel, since being placed in subcommittees, had more valuable information to contribute that was relevant, and straight to the point therefore resulting in a meeting that kept within the time frame but achieved more than the week before... Once again the committee did get bogged down in useless arguments such as worrying about all members having a copy of the minutes. That took 20 minutes to resolve with the answer being what was already being done!

Later in the semester, Tina's earlier optimism about effective meeting management seemed to have been well placed. The group's relationship with the community organisation was productive and the team was motivated to get the work done while in formal committee meetings.

Tina Week 10

In many respects we have been very lucky. Not only do we have a well functioning committee with excellent and motivated subcommittees we are also all able to get along and nearly all problems are resolved in the meeting, with nothing carried over into personal time. We are also fortunate in that we were given pretty much a free rein and support from the [community representative] involved on how we could present (after the initial 1/2 hour limit).

Following their return from holidays or from practical experience in other subjects, most committees simply took up where they had left off and continued to run efficient meetings that engendered confidence in their ability to work productively with each other and succeed in their project.

Elma Week 10

Meetings are evolving well and running smoothly. This decreases nervousness as the project structure is forming. Though voices of concern are still arising about how it will all come together, it all sounds good on paper. How it will go on the day is something else. Everyone's confidence is improved as things are going full steam ahead. The meetings I feel are now running efficiently. This is a bonus as people don't have to spend as much time in actually participating in the meetings, less bogging down, this allows for more important issues to be attended to. A little concern is overall felt by everyone, as today is our second last meeting before the 'day.'

Procedural matters had been raised for discussion during one of the early forums and various approaches to resolving committee impasses were canvassed with the combined student group. Students with several weeks of exposure to committee procedures eventually reached a stage where the finer points of formal committee process were of interest to them. Some students were interested in the effect of rules on the roles and processes in committees and used these rules as a basis for analysing why their committee was not as productive as it should be. In Cydne's view, people should have made the effort to learn the rules and then follow them.

Cydne Week 4

Today's committee meeting in my opinion when critically reflecting upon the proceeding, was a painful experience. There are several reasons which lead to me to draw this conclusion. The first being that the chairperson failed to carry out their role adequately. in that there was little or no structure in the meeting so that group members tended to get side tracked on unnecessary issues of discussion. The end result of this was that the chairperson failed to bring back the wandering group members to the agenda or structure of the meeting. Therefore not much was achieved...

My observations of the meeting were that group members failed to adhere to basic formal meeting procedures. This was demonstrated through individuals failing to raise their hands when wishing to speak and 3 to 4 people speaking at the one time. It may have eventuated because the chairperson failed to intervene when this occurred and group members are still also unaware of formal meeting procedure. They should learn it!

Some options available to committee members seemed daunting as students developed understanding of the formal procedures associated with committees. Clarice was both scared and motivated by the possibility of using the rules to force someone to decide either to perform in their role or to relinquish it.

Clarice Week 5

Tracey today brought up the concept of a 'Censure motion' and this was to do with certain people putting forward motions when it was not necessary. When I heard 'Censure Motion' I cringed my face and thought to myself what the hell does that mean, I knew they were up to no good with the whispers in the back. I eventually found out that a censure motion is when a person is not impressed with the proceedings for the meeting. This was covered really well in our lecture material. What I also found to be extremely interesting and scary (because of the fact that I'm on the ... team) was the lecture on health promotion. I didn't think there was this much to do for it... PS I nominated myself for secretary next week.

By mid semester most committees were well established and many of the students had adjusted to the strange rules of committee meetings and were using the jargon. In fact, wherever these rules were not followed challenges were mounted by committee participants wishing to hold each other accountable for their behaviour. Judy realized by mid-semester that she was becoming far more attentive and analytical about what was happening in her committee meetings.

Judy Week 5

Upon closer inspection of the previous week's minutes, I realize that the chairperson proposed and seconded motions. The rules state that this is not allowed, therefore, I find this to be very unfair as other members while chairperson felt like contributing during their time as chairperson also. Upon reflection, these errors have made me aware that mistakes do happen. It has allowed me to be more critical and not to take things at face value. I will be listening a lot more carefully as well as jotting information down, in the remaining meetings.

By Week six, students were taking the protocols and committee procedures seriously in that they were preparing themselves to take on management roles by becoming knowledgeable about what was expected. As more and more students identified gaps in their own knowledge and skill and then set about finding and learning whatever they needed to improve proficiency, it was clear that the learning opportunities that had been hoped for in the simulation were, in fact, occurring. A good example of this is the quote below from Mary who was interested in processes that had not worked during previous meetings. In her view some of the problems arose from colleagues who had not taken time to prepare for the meetings and others who seemed to have little regard for the rules of debate and committee work. She had volunteered to chair the meeting the following week and thought that it might provide her with an opportunity to move the project forward by ensuring that everyone contributed well to the committee process.

Mary Week 6

The meeting tended to get out of hand a couple of times. It turned out that the most contentious issues of the meeting could have easily been avoided if the subcommittee reports were given earlier. Information and queries that

were the source of the problem were resolved with the research committee presenting their report. One cannot help but wonder why they did not speak up during the discussion. Precious time was sacrificed by this omission of information. One of the functions of the chairperson is to keep the focus of discussion tasks. This aim was not achieved on a number of occasions.

As I have been elected to the chair for next week's committee meeting I intend reading up on the procedure of meetings, in particular the role of the chairperson. I have borrowed a library book...and hopefully this will give me a clearer idea of how to exercise control. As the author states, 'while a committee meeting is uninhibited by the formal constraints of other types of meetings it can provide the chairperson with particular problems. The informality should allow a free flow of ideas and information, but unless the chairperson exercises discreet yet firm control, the gathering can disintegrate into an undisciplined, unproductive meeting'...

The meeting, in general, was rather stressful on reflection. I think that this was because of the repetitive nature of some of the items... This matter arose a number of times and in actual fact it probably should have been dealt with early in the meeting and laid to rest when it first arose (I must remember this for next week).

Within a few weeks, journal entries indicate that various groups of students were demonstrating a growing confidence in meeting procedure and their ability to persuade fellow-students to support their arguments, and were using both committee and subcommittee structures to refocus on the project and the processes essential to its successful presentation. Tina's insights into what supports successful group work, combined with an astute insight into possibilities arising from disputation, negotiation and collaboration, enabled her to deal with the type of committee meeting during which those who disagreed were expected to justify their position and not rely simply on assertion of opinion.

Tina Week 8

Even though disagreement takes a lot longer to resolve than if all the committee members agree, I feel that it has become evident in this meeting that some disagreement leads to better progress as it requires those who don't agree to come up with alternatives. These have proved to be, in some cases, much more appropriate than the original suggestion. I'm not sure if disagreement is beneficial to all committees but it is certainly beneficial to ours.

Increasing confidence with the protocols of committee process enabled students to move beyond a mechanical implementation of rules, to a more thoughtful application of strategy. For instance, Annie and Amber had been overruled on an idea that they still believed would be of benefit to the committee, but in order to get it back on the agenda and reconsidered, they were faced with the challenge of working within the rules governing committee processes.

Annie Week 8

The subcommittee group met informally today. Amber and I put our idea to them. They all agreed it was a really great idea. The only problem was that we had all voted against using the [idea] and the [other] team had already set objectives according to this so there may be some opposition from the group.

Later that week, at the committee meeting:

Finally Amber and I presented our idea to the group. Everybody agreed it was good, however, this issue of the [previously rejected idea] was raised. I then proposed that we make an amendment to the previous proposal and include the [previously rejected idea] and this was carried. We then decided to ask the rest of the group who would like to work with us...

Even in Week eleven some groups were still trying to deal with poor team management issues such as being overly ambitious in what the committee had chosen to do for the community presentation.

Merilyn Week 11

Today we had our second last committee meeting. The committee meeting went really well, but the tension amongst people is pretty thick. One of the main reasons for this tension is at the beginning of the committee project, people came up with all these really big ideas to do, which meant heaps of work, but now as the day is coming closer and the work is not done or doesn't look like getting done, people are starting to freak out... At this committee meeting I felt like telling them I told you so, this is something we have been trying to say throughout the committee meetings. If only they had listened.

Project management

During the first few weeks of the simulation students were learning to compete for profile, to lobby for election, to develop an understanding of formal committee procedures and to manage a collaborative project. Being able to understand the protocols associated with formal committees was certainly a challenge faced by students in the simulation. It did not take long for most of them to realize that a more difficult aspect of the experience was in working well together in order to achieve the group project. Without a considerable level of cooperation and collaboration the project would not succeed and most students quickly realized that project management was an essential component of the learning experience.

Success in devising and managing a community project that would be suitable for presentation to the wider community, depended on all committee members working together to meet their agreed goals. Students in this subject were expected to apply all of the knowledge and skills from previous years of study as they assessed the target group's needs, negotiated the type of presentation and arranged the date and venue as

well as dealt with the logistics of putting on the presentation. They were given the contact details of people in community organisations who had given broad agreement to having students deliver some sort of health promotion, to meet the needs of that target group. Students began to realize that they were not just implementing a project set up for them by the university and it became clear to some students early in the semester that for their project to succeed, more organisation was needed and time could not be wasted. Also clear was the urgency of clarifying the purpose of the project and the contribution of each team member.

An overarching goal of the simulation was to encourage students to take individual and group responsibility for their projects and thereby experience what it means to be involved with project management. Most students wanted to take control and manage their teams, calling on faculty only when faced with, what seemed to be, insurmountable difficulties. However, for a few of the tutors who were expected take more of an observer role than to participate directly in these committees, the temptation to 'help' their committee proved too much and uninvited advice was occasionally offered to the students. Within a few weeks of semester students developed an overall sense of purpose and commitment to their projects that was clearly visible from the animated discussions and debates and enthusiastic competition for work associated with the project. It was not unexpected therefore when some students like Leigh, reflected on the behaviour of fellow students and tutors who seemed to be hampering their efforts to manage the project. Even so, Leigh admitted that she was learning something from this simulation that she would not have learned anywhere else.

Leigh Week 5

I have mixed thoughts about running tutorials as formal committee meetings. For one, I have learnt so much already about what is like to be in a committee that I probably couldn't have learnt anywhere else. In another way, it sure can slow us up. In between frantic secretaries trying to take down minutes and the tutor pulling us up because we are going about something in the wrong way, we can get bogged down. I think though, that everyone would definitely agree with me when I say that this subject has been an experience.

Throughout the various groups there was evidence that students were realizing that they needed to understand more than the rules of committee process if they were to achieve a coordinated effort on their projects. Many, like Irene in the quote below, realized that fundamental to effective project management was the ability of her committee to reach good decisions. Irene who, although usually a quiet person, was

finding that mutual respect was something everyone needed to develop if the team was to successfully manage the project.

Irene Week 2

This week's meeting was havoc, and it was frustrating being there. The chairperson did not keep order and she was not sure of committee proceedings. The subcommittee (which I am part of) was cut off to go to another thing on the agenda, then when they came back to my subcommittee, we were cut off again. Furthermore, without knowing about the services and exactly how someone wanted to give us a limit on how many services we should talk about. No one wanted to hear what we had to present, but liked to make decisions on what they did not know...WHY? Is no one listening to our subcommittee? At this stage presenting information is the most important thing on the agenda. Only from there can decisions be made

Later in the week:

Most of the committee met after lectures today to have an informal meeting. This meeting gave the subcommittees a chance to discuss what they had done and what they plan to do. Suggestions should be informally made and understood without fighting and arguing. If there is one positive thing starting to come out, it is respect for each other's roles and confidence in doing their roles.

It did not take long for the enormity of the task of organising and presenting a health education and promotion event to dawn on most of the students. Student groups that had become more familiar with meeting procedure noticed that their interactions settled into a less hostile pattern, and ways to make the process more effective became clear as they worked towards the goal of developing a community presentation. Lillian, quoted below describes the realization that she reached about the project and what would be needed for the group to manage it well. She could see the benefits to project management of being organized, determined and assertive.

Lillian Week 5

This meeting began very informally. There was a fair amount of social exchange before we officially began the meeting, that is, recording it. I seemed at a loss trying to think of ways to tackle this monster goal. It seemed impossible to organize such a diverse group of individuals into a group that could produce what is required. It seemed everyone else felt a similar helplessness because we started with the most obvious and easiest beginning, brain-storming ideas for the presentation. Very few other factors arose. Although at the beginning of the meeting the goals that were set before us seemed hopelessly far away, the meeting was productive enough to quiet some nervousness. It will take a couple of weeks to work out exactly how all our committees will work together and our jobs within those committees. I now don't doubt that it is possible, but it is going to be a great effort. Organisation, determination and assertiveness is essential for our success...

Many of the groups involved in the simulation realized once the novelty of learning and using committee protocols had declined, that the project still needed to be managed and that time was limited. For example, Judith thought that clarification of goals might prompt better communication and collaboration on the project.

Judith Week 5

Today's meeting seemed to go quite well...There seemed to be some conflicting ideas about who should be doing what. This uncertainty about subcommittee roles and responsibilities is making the progress of the group slow and at times very frustrating.

The goal of the committee could now be argued to be very hazy. We have not as a committee formally written down what our aims and objectives are and therefore we are having difficulty with knowing how to achieve our undefined goal. On a smaller scale the aims and objectives of the weekly meetings are not being decided and therefore the progress we are making is all over the place. We are not collaborating on the ideas and achievements of the different committee meetings.

Cydne held a similar view and was keen to deal with the lack of direction that seemed to be holding back her group project. She decided to help her colleagues by showing them exactly what was required, hoping that they might set some strategic goals to follow.

Cydne Week 3

Another issue making me feel frustrated is that as a group we seem to lack direction and I tried to emphasize in the meeting a need for us to have goals or objectives so we work towards achieving a common purpose. My words seemed to drift off into the air. I feel the only way to achieve anything is to have a strategic set of goals. It may be I need to push this more at the next meeting. I mean really push this! Otherwise the group will continue to talk about things but not act. My first frustration could possibly be resolved by taking a file or two to the meetings so group members can see in real life what we have to do.

Different groups of students devised ways of encouraging other students to comply with committee rules and to do the project work that had been allocated to them. Mostly these strategies fell within existing processes of project management however, in Ilze's group the committee decided to impose penalties on late submission of work. I had been consulted in the lead-up to this decision and suggested that they would need to consider their proposal in light of how other students might respond to their proposal of such a drastic measure. I also suggested they consider the effect generally of setting such precedents, and stressed the need to gain consensus within the project group before any new rules were implemented.

Ilze Week 6

Today, I found the functional ability of the group to have improved, for we have discovered what we have to do and also how to achieve those goals. One problem I saw in regard to the subcommittee is collecting all the relevant data, for we have had trouble getting subgroups to hand in their aims and objectives. This trouble has led to us being really nasty and placing due dates on the subgroup's presentation reports. Also we have been forced to put penalties on any that are submitted late. These drastic measures really show how you have no friends within the committee. But the measures were necessary for otherwise we would have had to hound the subgroups for the relevant information and as a result we would have had very little time in order to complete the work.

By mid-semester project management had benefited from some solid decision-making that had brought some clarity of purpose and a certain level of self-discipline among the committee members, probably because most of the decisions needed to set up the projects had been resolved. The only work remaining was associated with implementing the project plan at a standard that the group desired.

Robert Week 7

The committee meeting itself was an advancement in all areas from the previous week. The presentation itself actually was given some very direct points to work with... The pleasing aspect of the meeting that it was positive without arguments or hostilities being made in every direction. The group realises that time is slowly running out and the time for disagreements is not within the time allocated for the group meetings. Maybe it is a sign that we are acting as adults and forgetting the differences that we may have. The other factor is we have our directions within the group now everybody has to work towards these goals so the group can succeed.

As the weeks progressed, more and more students referred in their journals, to cooperation and collaboration as the keys to team success. Peggy regarded co-operation as being no less than the 'golden key.'

Peggy Week 8

Today there were two meetings running consecutively... This was carried out as we could see we were falling behind in our scheduled times and didn't want this to affect our presentation on the day. Therefore, our own time was surrendered. This made me realize that joining and being part of a committee takes up a lot more of your time than one would like to think. I find myself in my spare time creating health posters, visiting ... clinics or surgeries in hope of receiving free samples etc. This is good in one aspect as in the future if I am ever faced with being a committee member for a specific project I will understand the need for team cooperation, which is the golden key to making things run a lot smoother and take a lot less time.

But for collaboration to occur the people involved need to perceive each other as equal contributors to the project task, otherwise the relationship and the project was less likely to be sustained. Project management by the students required them to find ways

of working with people whom they did not know well, and with people who did not want to be fully involved in the group project. Janice, who had thought in Week one that the team would be a disaster, found by mid semester that the progress of her group had become a source of pride.

Janice Week 7

It's so good to see how a group of people can work as a team, and achieve so much within a period of time. Our group had worked so well, even though we have been flooded by other commitments, such as work, assignments and so on. I am so proud of my group because we are well organized and everything is planned for presentation day.

Patterns of work activity altered with different phases of the project developments. Early in the simulation some subcommittees were very busy in researching the topic and planning the presentation. In the latter part of the simulation subcommittees responsible for gathering resources and setting up the presentation were more busy and the earlier groups were less so. At the very end of the simulation other subcommittees responsible for the committee documentation and evaluation of the presentation would have considerable work to do. Unfortunately, some group members who initially were not busy, were now feeling very stressed and wanted help from their colleagues who seemed to have more time on their hands.

Robert Week 9

Committee meeting: The other disheartening factor is each subcommittee is 'closing ranks' and not helping any other subcommittees with the presentation. In some ways production is still on the move but it is vitally important in these past few weeks that everyone pulls together and helps one another.

A few days later, following a subcommittee meeting:

When comparing the committee group that I am in to the others we are going pretty well. We have our directions and we seem to be following them accordingly. The subcommittee that I am in are all pulling together nicely. It's interesting to note that all the group subcommittees are functioning quite well. I think this is due to the small size of the group and the fact there is less pressure for marks to be allocated towards these. There also seems to be a sense of achievement within each subcommittee group with the goal that has to be met. It can be focused on, unlike the big groups meetings.

The workload associated with projects was linked to management decisions that students had taken early in the semester when they devised their plans and decided how these would be implemented. Several committees had been careful to set up presentations that could be effective but not involve exceedingly heavy workloads, whereas other groups had opted for quite complicated presentations requiring lots of

equipment and rehearsals. Students, such as Dinah quoted below, often found that they had to compromise in order to bring their projects to completion.

Dinah Week 10

Being a part of the subcommittee has been a great challenge. The workload has been plentiful and time consuming. I have also found it very challenging working with some members of this team. There hasn't been any personal conflict. It has been challenge because we all come from different backgrounds (not ethnicity) have different attitudes, beliefs and personalities. And sometimes this 'difference' interferes with the productiveness of the groups. On some occasions, I have had to compromise my beliefs, for the benefit of the group. I don't regret my decision to compromise, but they were only minor issues, but also because it kept the 'peace' and an effective and productive working environment and relationship. The outcome of our work and evaluation report will convince me that I have made the right choice and will illustrate the commitment and efforts of this group.

As the presentation day approached, project preparation activity became frenzied and students worked to have everything ready for the presentation. In most groups, students worked cooperatively and with little complaint, sharing the workload. Their commitment to the team project caused most students, like Claire, to put aside the interpersonal differences that featured earlier in the simulation.

Claire Week 12

We had arranged a two and a half-hour meeting the day before our presentation. Everyone was present and enthusiastic. All the material for our stalls was brought in, and we had managed to accumulate and make some impressive things. When all our materials were together in one room, it was only then that we realized all our hard work and running around was worth it... We rehearsed the presentation for 2 hours, finally I, and many other students were realizing we could pull this off.

I was very pleased with today as we all worked well together. Despite previous differences of opinion, and personality clashes, we were all determined to make our presentation successful. I can honestly say everyone within our committee contributed equally to the day, we were all committed and I was sure no one would let us down.

Most students retained a secure focus on how their contributions to the project could be translated into assessment marks but in all but a few instances, these students remained motivated and committed to the success of their presentations. Travis enjoyed the frenzy and noticed that other students also had begun to enjoy each other's company as they worked together on their project.

Travis Week 10

Constructive and progressive were the two words I'd use to discuss our meeting today. We seem to have a lot going on, and commitment from all members in each group is apparent... I don't think I had any qualms this meeting... The meeting was closed on a good note but we still managed to

stay back at least 20 minutes. It was an organisational frenzy. Subcommittee meetings in progress, finalising bits and pieces, we even managed a rehearsal which I saw and which seemed OK... It was a real experience. What I saw was a group full of enthusiastic and committed individuals, making sure that the project was a success and also that our final efforts are reflected in our marks.

Most of the project presentations were held during Week thirteen and involved students dealing with the logistics of borrowing equipment, transporting it to and from the presentation site, setting up the displays and preparing themselves to present. It was apparent that most students had moved from purely individualistic behaviour to being committed contributors to group work that was based on professional relationships rather than relying on emotional ties of a personal, intimate nature. Throughout this week, student behaviours seemed more oriented towards finding solutions to last minute problems affecting the whole group or project than focusing only on their own specific task responsibilities. It was clear that the teams of students were working now to achieve the best results for the community target group for whom they had prepared their presentation.

Self and time management

Within the general theme of bureaucratic skills and ability, the capacity to self-manage is vital to being able to contribute to the team and to achieve individual work which is an essential part of the group project. Students generally learn to prioritise their academic work according to advice given by faculty, and to operate within schedules set down by faculty. However, prior to this simulation, few had had to devise their own workloads, set priorities by themselves and to judge whether they had taken on too little or too much work in relation to other commitments in their lives.

Without exception, journal entries for the first week of the simulation contained emotional statements about the subject, its assessment, the committees and the time that would be required to complete the projects. Students were very open about their fears and doubts in these early journal entries and many expressed their hopes that things would get better once they learned to manage themselves and their time. Desiree observed, for instance, how everyone seemed to manage their responses to the tension they all felt about the project.

Desiree Week 4

Everyone had finally decided to take this whole thing seriously. We still disagreed and argued, though constructively, so everything finally seems to be falling into place and hopefully optimum functioning will return. There's been some tension arising amongst a few of the group members too in the

last couple of meetings... so there's some tension and aggression developing within the committee now. One person's views, opinions, arguments haven't bothered me at all, within the committee meetings as yet - I think it's good that she stands up for herself and her ideas etc. It gets the rest of the group thinking and involved in discussion whether they're arguing for or against. Group interaction evolves, with everyone feeling free to express their ideas and opinions and then having to present supportive reasoning. It gets everyone thinking. A little display of courtesy on her behalf wouldn't go astray though...

In terms of self-management, most of the students linked their initial nervousness to the fact that they were unfamiliar with meeting procedures and the organisation of project teams. While many students who had had no previous experience of committees seized the opportunity to get as much as they could out of this new learning experience, most experienced some confusion and disquiet about the effect of committee roles on their usual ways of behaving and relating to each other. Jack was worried that this first meeting seriously exceeded the time allocated. As did many other students in the first week of the simulation, Jack anticipated that there would be a need for self control.

Jack Week 1

Due to this being our initial committee meeting, chaos erupted with regard to the content of our presentation, let alone how to go about it...The meeting exceeded its scheduled one hour by forty minutes, and I could sense some committee members becoming restless at this, including myself. I feel that this one of the responsibilities of being in a committee is that some sacrifices will have to be made in order for all members involved to work as a team.

Some students made lengthy entries in their journals, canvassing the workings of their committees and trying to understand what was expected of them in this subject and in the simulation. Students who were less than calm about the challenges involved, invariably tried to manage their concerns by seeking information that might assist them to deal with this new situation. Nervousness among students in their very first committee meeting led to some students expressing their irritation in the meetings and, when later reflecting on their experiences, they did not censor on their views.

Marjorie Week 1

Chaos is all that I can say for the meeting that has just passed. Nobody really knew what was going on, and what we were supposed to be doing. At least we found out how we weren't supposed to run a committee meeting.

Some students were caught off guard by the implementation of rigid, formal structure around the committees, particularly that of starting business at the time scheduled. Those who expected the tutorials to be run similarly to the tutorials they had attended

for the past two years and were quite surprised to find that their tardiness was very obvious to their colleagues. Missing out on the beginning of the first committee meeting also left them confused and some, like Eliza and Hannah, found that they were at a distinct disadvantage because they were late.

Eliza Week 1

I got off to a bad start as I walked into the committee meeting late, it was only 5 minutes but this is a definite no-no, in the functioning of committee meetings. I had to apologise and ask permission for entry from the chairperson (which was my friend but not a superior co-worker). This afternoon was sure an experience, not only did it feel like I was in a battlefield, I thought I was getting attacked by enemies. I prayed for silence the whole hour but no one would shut up. I even found myself raising my voice to be heard over the top of everyone. I wasn't sure why this was happening, but I don't think other members were aware either... Despite lack of cohesion between the group it was a success in that we all came out alive realizing what idiots we were... Overall, I feel nothing of great value was achieved today and it has left me confused about the reasoning behind this subject.

Hannah Week 1

Today was our first meeting and after arriving five minutes late, I was in total shock when entering the room. The meeting was just beginning to start and I had no idea what was happening because we had not even had an introduction lecture to the subject. Most of the members had not attended a formal meeting before so we were unsure of how to run the meeting. It appeared to be very confusing but with the help of Tracey (the tutor) we seemed to adapt to it easier.

It did not take long for students to commit extra time and energy to their projects as well as try to manage themselves and their time more efficiently. The extra commitment from most students was based on a sincere desire for the group to do well with their community presentation. Even in their own time during semester breaks and on weekends, many students maintained their interest in gathering resources that would help the projects.

Beth Week 7 During the holidays:

Having read over the journal I have come to the conclusion that my attitude and thoughts along with the group as a whole have changed. Seven weeks ago, there was a sense of hesitation of completing the task set in front of us, a sense of awe at the amount of work that was to be placed into the task, and a general lack of enthusiasm to work in a group. The committee has now been working together for seven weeks. There are a few hitches and personality hang ups but on a whole we are working well as a group. It has been difficult with the short time span we have had. This has made us get straight into the work and use our time management skills. There is a general sense of achievement with what we have completed so far, plus a sense of challenge felt by most people in going to the [community organisation]. People are starting to feel prepared, organized and ready to

'give it to them.' I will admit I also have a feeling of can't wait till it is 'over and done with.' I think this is because it has taken up so much time and effort. I've just about had enough of it!

Peggy noticed that her extra commitment to the project was causing her to include thoughts about it even when she was not at university.

Peggy Week 9

I now find myself whenever I am out unconsciously looking for anything that relates in the slightest way to our topic. This has made me realize that once you are committed to a particular project you can really become absorbed into ensuring that all things run smoothly.

Management of time and timelines to achieve the broad range of project work that needed to be done was something that pervaded the management of every meeting and the self-management of every student. Time was a significant and quite limited resource that students came to understand and none more so than Cydne who focused on how time management affected several elements associated with her project.

Cydne Week 4

It was evident that many of the motions put forward were not resolved and new ones were allowed to be brought to the forefront. This was annoying because many of the motions became unclarified and confusing... Time management was non-existent in this formal meeting. By this I mean too much time was spent on non-significant issues and not enough was allocated to more substantial matters at hand like making some concrete decisions. It may be that the insufficient use of time was due to the failure of the chairperson to delegate and direct how much time was given to each topic under discussion.

Therefore if I'm quick to point out that the meeting had some painful aspects let me suggest some ways we could improve the situation... It becomes apparent we need to manage the allocation of time delegated to the discussion of issues. This can simply be resolved by the chairperson directing the time and moving members along so that the proceedings keep going.

Much time was spent on one issue meaning we didn't discuss more pertinent matters. Other issues were we had to decide on topics the subcommittee could use in a meeting tomorrow if they were relevant... In reflecting upon this it seems that our group is taking a particularly long time to decide on a final topic. The end result being that time is slipping away and we have a lot of other things to plan. It also seems the other subcommittees can't commence their work until this is finalised.

Time management within meetings often depended on the ability of the chairperson to manage the debate and get through the agenda. As part of the simulation the committees were required to set up ways of dealing with correspondence and other forms of communication. I periodically sent letters to committees informing them of developments related to their projects or informing them of deadlines for particular

aspects of progress on projects to be formally reported to me. Time pressure had a moderating effect on some of the disruptive behaviours that had been occurring in the early weeks of the simulation. Students who had been indulging in rowdy behaviour came to realize that time was being wasted and that the outcome could be that the project might not be ready in time for presentation. In the quote below, Desiree's description is typical of the efforts being made by most students to manage time and the work they needed to do on their projects.

Desiree Week 4

'Praise the Lord' ! we have progress. The meeting today went extremely well, we organized our topic... and we organized sub-topics and groups to organize those topics. I think everyone got a bit scared actually - the 2 letters we got from Tracey, the fact that everyone else is basically pretty much organized, except us who didn't even have a topic.

Everyone had calmed down from our last meeting too, people having time to settle down and think about the whole thing with the dominating fact that we are totally disorganized as a group at the moment. The meeting ran surprisingly well... I actually thought that the rest of the group would get so worked up and angry that they'd run rough shod over the chairperson. That didn't happen though, I think everyone finally realized we have a presentation to make and there's no way out so we'd better get our bums into gear.

Time management problems often arose from inexperience and in some groups the solution seemed to be to allocate more time to the task, and scheduled more meetings. The widespread desire students demonstrated regarding mapping their progress and maintaining a competitive edge engendered high expectations of students' use of time. Group pressure was exerted on those whose work had not been completed, as well as on those whose behaviour detracted from the project. In some groups the student response was to further tighten the constraints of formal committee protocols. Charmaine describes below, the determination of her group to pay close attention to how each of the students managed their own time and contributions to the project.

Charmaine Week 4

I think our meeting today achieved what it set out to do and ran quite smoothly... Although in places it seemed to lose direction, I believe that was due to inexperience on behalf of the chairperson and our group as a whole. I believe that for a meeting to run smoothly, it needs to have a chairperson that knows exactly how to run and organize a meeting...

We ended our meeting by writing up an agenda for next week, then elected our new chairperson and secretary. We then split up into our committees to discuss what to do for next week. I believe that it is very important that individual groups meet as often as possible throughout the week, so that we make sure everyone is on the right track, as well as participating in as much research and work preparation for our project.

The scheduling of more meetings to compensate for time wasted earlier in the semester because of the behaviour of particular students, was also a source of frustration for many students. Among the many student groups, frequent consultations were sought with me to discuss ways of dealing with a range of problems arising from poor time management leading to low productivity; as well as heightened expectations of group commitment resulting in more and more meetings being scheduled. The latter was a problem in Don's group where another student, who was anxious about low productivity, had been pushing the group to have more and more meetings.

Don Week 12

We had an unofficial meeting today. Things are getting organized but I still think there are problems... I still cannot change the progress of the group. I still find problems in communicating with Neville. His ideas seem quite different to mine, even though we have been mates for ages, it seems like we are doing totally different presentations. You have hinted that we should not have had so many meetings and that they should not be necessary, but he pushes for more meetings. I get frustrated and withdraw from the meetings. I get so angry I just don't talk.

By the end of the simulation there were few, if any, students who had not learned to structure their own time in terms of personal productivity, as well as working with others who might have priorities that conflicted with their own from time to time. The experience of establishing a structured work-plan for the project, for various groups within that plan, and for their own output in this and other concurrent subjects, was central to the bureaucratic skills I had hoped students would learn through the simulation.

Teamwork

Complex organisations such as the public health system and its associated bureaucracy, include an interesting combination of individual and combined efforts of people who are highly educated, ambitious and competitive. In setting up the simulation to capture the various pressures of the health industry environment I was keen to prioritise teamwork while not quashing competition and ambition. By allocating assessment points to both individual effort and group achievement I planned to provide an effective counterbalance between competitive self-interest among the students and the benefits to them of being a full contributor to the team. Student groups were quite large, but so were the projects, and this meant that there was sufficient work for all to do provided they organized themselves into effective working groups, or subcommittees, who reported their achievements to the main decision-making group, project team or main committee.

Students realized as early as the first week of semester that everyone's priority would need to be working as an effective team. Information in the student handbook, the content of lectures and debates in the various forums all indicated the importance of participating as a strong individual within a cooperative and productive team.

Competition in the first few weeks was quite disruptive as students made every effort to win recognition in the minutes in order to increase their profile and to gain assessment marks for themselves. But while the marking criteria was identified by many students, as the source of the problem, there were quite a few students such as Eliza quoted below, who realized from the beginning of the simulation that teamwork in preparing for a successful presentation, rather than competition for marks, would eventually become the priority.

Eliza Week 1

It is becoming evident there are those who are outspoken and those who need encouragement in our group. I believe people are taking these committee meetings too competitively and unfortunately if this continues our group will not be as productive as we all expect. We need to work as a team and not solely just to gain marks. Already I have noticed, some students are entering the meetings simply to get their name in the minutes the most and not to constructively offer ideas for the project. At this point in time I feel the marking criteria has an element of negativity on the functioning of the meeting however I am confident we will settle down and focus on the presentation rather than marks.

By Week seven, most committees had formed into working teams and were performing to expectations. This generated a feeling that the projects were on target and the work being completed. The sense of team achievement was commented upon by several students throughout the semester even when problems within the team seemed ongoing. For Marsha and May the building of team spirit was important and, even when the worrying behaviour of some colleagues persisted, their belief that they were working together sustained them.

Marsha Week 7

I feel a bit more at ease with this assignment now. We seem to be working well together now. I don't think we are as panicked about the whole thing as what we were in the beginning.

May Week 7

The meetings now have direction. I'm a lot happier to be part of the committee. There is finally evidence of team effort and cooperation... A strong point of the group is it has an imaginative ability which generates new ideas easily and having people in the group of all ages and cultures means we can draw on all kinds of experience... The negative aspects of the meeting were people were still worried about the point scoring and are always trying to score points by proposing and seconding things. The

chairperson doesn't always insist on hands being shown to stop the arguing.

With very few meetings remaining before the presentation day, most students attempted to move away from the highly competitive behaviours that were a feature at the start of semester. In their place, productive partnerships were established that would allow project goals to be met. As groups began to achieve this new team approach to project management more and more students began to enjoy the subcommittee and committee meetings. For Marilyn the new harmony that was occurring within her team was an accomplishment that changed the way she felt about meetings.

Marilyn Week 8

I have gone into shock, I still don't believe what happened today, it's a miracle! Our committee group got along for the first time ever. The committee meeting went really well, the chairperson did a really good job, each subgroup reported their week's activities and after we had a general discussion about the presentation day... If this keeps happening in our committee meetings, I might start to enjoy them. It felt so good to see everyone get along. It feels like our group has finally accomplished harmony amongst ourselves.

By Week eight, the change of emphasis from individual to team achievement was happening across the various student committees and while many commented on these changes, Norah's journal entry typifies the sentiments felt by students who had found the experience quite daunting in the beginning. In fact, because the team environment had settled down, Norah decided she was now ready to take on a leadership position in committee meetings.

Norah Week 8

Since everybody is obviously working so hard to get their presentations together the mood of the meeting was very different today. No one was screeching out like they usually do and there was definitely, dare I say it, a collaborative effort shining through. The whole point of the subject shone through quite blatantly today and anyone who didn't notice would have to be a cause for concern. We were all shown to be working towards a central goal - our presentation. We all have plans, objectives and strategies to get us to this point. I think everyone is looking at the presentation as a 'group' performance now and, we are all eager to make it a success.

Even the selection of chair and secretary had quietened down so I thought I may as well agree to the nomination. I am secretary for next week - no fuss, everyone agreed as they did for the selection of the chair. The mood and manner of everyone was certainly different. There was no bitching and everyone was friendly and personable.

It was during the forum presentations that team efforts became most apparent and as the simulation progressed these forums developed into an opportunity for teams to

compare their own progress with that of other teams. The forums were intended to allow all students to hear how various teams overcame their difficulties and worked on projects, but they became something more as the students made comparisons between their own achievements and those of their colleagues. For many of the students, these comparisons provoked some anxiety but also greater insight into their own responses as well as those of their team-mates. For example, Beth found working within the time and other constraints of her team quite frustrating but she realized that for the project to succeed she would have to become part of an effective team.

Beth Week 6

It is great to hear how the other groups are going. However it can make me feel a little tense if I start to compare where our group is up to compared to the others. I like to do well in all that I do, and I can feel frustrated when other people can go ahead with the amount of work they do and I am withheld, because of having to wait till group meetings. However, I also realize I would not be able to cope with doing it all myself - and so I need the others in my group.

It was not until the end of her journal that Judy realized why she had felt anxious during the forums as she listened to her colleagues presenting their reports. Her empathy with what they must be going through was drawn from having experienced the pressure of representing one's team in front of the forum.

Judy Week 14

I felt really anxious, even though I was not presenting. It occurred to me that I was nervous for the people that were presenting, as it brought back memories of when I had to present at the forum. In addition I imagined that the presenters had a great deal of pressure on them, to perform well. As their overall performance would reflect upon the rest of the group. Therefore, I empathised with what each member must be going through.

As part of the process of examining roles that develop and wane over time in committees, I presented some information at the Week twelve forum that might assist students to confront the fact that the committee would soon disband. From their experiences with committees they were now ready to reflect on the types of roles that they had undertaken, and those that they had observed other students perform. Tina's reflections in Week twelve used the lecture material to identify the various types of roles and contributions made by other members of her team and in so doing, she recognised the complexity of team interactions and the value of individual contributions to the team project.

Tina Week 12

When listening to Tracey's lecture as she described the type of individuals that make up committees I started to think of our committee and which individuals we have that conform to those roles. We have an initiator,

information seeker, recognition seeker, gate keeper, blocker and although these people may seem painful at times, they provided continuous input and much needed roles within the committee.

Whether or not it was related to being able to identify the value of different roles within committees and realize how these roles interacted to support team goals, student behaviour in the latter part of the semester focused on productive team effort and in most instances, these efforts were increasingly social as well as professional. Lydia's group had suffered quite badly from infighting early in the semester but had now developed a new approach to teamwork that enabled them all to laugh about their earlier behaviours.

Lydia Week 12

Today's committee meeting ran very smoothly. Suddenly all members of the group were relaxed and it was obvious that our presentation was coming together nicely and really being organized. Subcommittee groups disappeared as all members of the team offered to help other subcommittee groups. The focus was now on getting the job done, and not so much who's job it was to do it. It was nice to see our group getting on so well again, enjoying each others company, and laughing about how bitchy and silly we'd been in past meetings.

Following the presentation some students took a moment to reflect on the team management aspects of the simulation and commented on how their views of teamwork had changed over the semester. Janice had thought the whole idea of the project was a nightmare but because she and her colleagues built up an effective team she believed she learned a lot about teamwork.

Janice Week 14

Now when I look back at our first few meetings, I can't actually believe the difference. We have achieved so much, and mind you, this is the first time, for most of our group members, that we as a group organized a health promotion project, which sounded like a nightmare in week 1 of university session. After all, it was not so much of a nightmare, but I must say 'an experience' which has taught me so many things about working as a team. Not that I have problems working as a team, but in some cases, you do get a variety of people, from the super-eager to the plain, not-as-as-collaborative team, to make it a success!

The benefits of teamwork were also worthy of Ken's notice and he could see that even when the members of the team did not know each other well, teamwork could accomplish so much.

Ken Week 14

I guess what this exercise has demonstrated to me and the others is, how much one can accomplish when working together as a team, even when one starts off in a group not knowing many people. Our success can be put down to the simplicity of our presentation with high regard to the audience,

to overcome the side issues that impede group functioning and focus on the main purpose of the group.

The experience provided by the simulation was, for many students, quite daunting. Even so, it had pushed most of them beyond what they could have imagined they could do. One of the many students who commented in their final entry about what they had learned was Elmer. She associated teamwork with professionalism and because of the effort she and her team had made on the project she believed she had got something worthwhile out of the experience.

Elma Week 14

The structure of the committee and the functioning that was finally mastered towards the end allowed for a whole of group effort that paid off well. As we watched ourselves on television, portrayed as a professional, organized caring group who put in an excellent effort, it was well worth the stress and frustration that emerged during the committees' term. This was a piece of assessment that I can truly say I enjoyed doing, and I would do it all again. It was amazing how everyone worked as a team, displaying confidence and professionalism far beyond what we thought we were capable of. Thank you Tracey for making it possible for us to undertake this experience, which I feel was a worthwhile, exciting, educational project.

By the end of the simulation every student had had the opportunity to play an important part within their project teams. While some students did not take up these opportunities, many did, and it is evident from their journals that they benefited greatly from working with colleagues in a close team performing a worthwhile service to the community. Individual challenges and rewards occurred for many students as they tried to live up to their team's expectations. Leonie's journal entry for the final week speaks for many of the students who had put so much of themselves into the presentations.

Leonie Week 14

Today we had our presentation, what a success. I was so amazed to walk in there... and already people were seated. I started to get butterflies, I was presenting. I was nervous but was determined to speak clearly and properly. The hall was wonderful and everyone had pulled together for this great day. I did my presentation and did the best I could, the worst part was my knees wouldn't stop shaking, but the speakers did a wonderful job... It was great to see and be part of a day that became such a success through a formal process. I felt we really came through in the end and all achieved our goals... I also was proud as I was thanked personally by one of the people for my presentation...After the day we all went to the local pub for a drink and chat and reminisced on such a good day ... 'What a team.'

Discussion

In terms of the ways in which students perceived the situation of having to work within formal committee structures, their journals indicated a general discomfort about having to give up the relative freedom they had come to appreciate as students and join a committee. For some committee participation meant complying with a system of behaviour that seemed not only pointless but cruel. While no students actually used the word 'cruel' the message was clear from some early journal entries that they did not like the situation. They did not want to discipline their behaviour in a situation over which they had little control and especially in a subject that many thought should have been easy to complete at the end of their studies.

From the excerpts provided above there is evidence that students found coping with this strange environment a problem even though Blaise, Penny and Harriet seemed to be well able to articulate their concerns on the topic. Most of the strong emotional comments seemed to be related to the way some colleagues tried to dominate the meetings and other people. A further worry seemed to relate to the emergence of factionalism within what had once been regarded as a fairly placid group of people.

The challenge identified by most of the students was to control the rowdy group so that the agenda of the meeting could be accomplished. Some students, like Millie, showed unusual courage when being challenged by another student during a meeting and earned the respect of colleagues like Fanny who observed what had occurred. It was this type of reassessment of themselves and each other that I had hoped would occur as part of the simulation-based strategy. In fact the insights gained by those who noticed what was happening exceeded my expectations of the learning environment.

Controlling rowdy colleagues and occasionally oneself, seemed to be a skill that eluded many students as they tried to chair meetings and record the minutes. With little prompting, students like John, Marian, Hannah and Mary quickly realized the value of conducting orderly meetings. They expressed concerns about the need for meeting protocols to be enforced so that some order could be achieved. All indicated a belief that if meetings were orderly there would be more equity and greater productivity. But whose responsibility was it to enforce the rules?

Most students detected a link between chairperson competence and the opportunity for all present to have their ideas heard. Trisha was especially critical of those who did not exercise the power of the chair to bring order to meetings but also calls for greater accountability were being applied to various other aspects of meeting management.

For instance Tina confronted a colleague who seconded a proposal, and demanded to hear the person's reasons for seconding the idea. Other students like Judy were impressed by Tina's stand and fully supported what had occurred.

Once they had come to terms with the more emotive aspects of the simulation, usually at around the second or third week, students entered a stage of beginning analysis focused on understanding why people were behaving as they did in meetings. Emily could see the effect of the assessment system in motivating some people, while Eliza could see the value in adhering to procedure and Elma quite enjoyed the development of efficiency in meeting procedures towards the end of the simulation.

Understanding the rules of play and realizing that there were few constraints applied to how these rules were able to be put to use, prompted some students like Cydne to consider ways of applying them to colleagues who had not met her expectations. Other students like Clarice became interested in the application of more esoteric protocols such as 'censure motions' while Tina discovered the advantages of lobbying and consulting on an issue prior to meetings. The rules were available to all who wanted to use them to force a position and sometimes, as in the case of Annie and Amber, to have their voices and ideas heard.

Linkages between the various strategies used by students gradually emerged as they began to take ownership of their group projects. Ownership leading to commitment to the project was apparent in comments from students like Travis who felt enthusiastic as a result of his commitment to the work. Peggy and Cydne also took on extra work, as did Beth, so that their project would be a success. But the enthusiasm went further than simply working for a successful project. There was a palpable sense of enjoyment at their own growth in skills and confidence that further motivated some students to get as much out of the experience as they could.

The skills they had built up in the 'bear pit' of committee meetings were found to be useful when dealing with the general public and negotiating with community representatives about their projects. Interactions that began to occur within meetings and on campus took on a more 'professional' tone and this was noticed by a number of students such as Irene, Lillian and Judith who were pleased at the change this type of interaction brought to the project. Robert was particularly pleased at the harmony that was developing within his group that enabled work sharing to occur. He, along with Claire and Dinah, expressed interest in being able to manage workloads more

effectively as their bureaucratic competence increased and because of the less stressful meeting environments that had developed as a result.

As student confidence in their own analytic abilities grew more and more students reflected deeply on the effects of time-pressure, performance of roles and accountability associated with project work. Even those students who continued loudly and with conviction to debate most issues came to be regarded by Desiree and Don as contributing something of value to the process. Issues of self-discipline were also examined by students such as Jack who wondered why some people could manage their time and others seemed unable, or Cydne who took a keen interest in time management. Scrutiny of other students in leadership positions led some like Charmaine who claimed that she did not want to be a leader, to think about the types of behaviour that supported the project. Like Desiree, she concluded that mutual respect that enabled collaboration to occur was among the most productive responses colleagues could adopt.

Much of the tension that abounded within student committees was directly related to either the conflicting agendas of individuals trying to advance their own agenda, or that of the group needing to work well together to achieve a successful project. At first these two goals seemed to be mutually exclusive and many students entered the realms of dilemma in trying to devise ways to achieve both. As they worked alone and together on this tricky problem, most eventually realized that a compromise position could be reached. Some students such as Tina and Ken, were aware of the complexity of interactions within the teams but they were keen to recognise the value of individual contributions to team efforts. Their views were similar to those of Lydia and Janice who also believed that productive teams were comprised of enthusiastic individuals. In essence, if people who were strong individual contributors within the committee it was possible to gain profile as well as helping the committee to achieve the group goal. Eliza was one of the first to realize the relationship between individualism and group cohesion while others like Marsha and Mary focused on the development of 'team spirit' to encourage the many individualists to join in.

As the teams became more effective in working together while accepting diversity among its members, committee harmony improved to the point where some students like Marilyn and Norah, who earlier had been too afraid to chair the rowdy meetings, thought they might now like to have a turn at leading. Occasionally a student had an opportunity to observe changes in relationships within their teams and on one

occasion, Letitia was able to detect quite significant shifts in group interaction after only a few weeks. Overall the sense of team achievement that the majority of students mentioned in their journals reinforced the value of the learning experience to individual students and also to their experience of teamwork.

In summary, the evidence and discussion above suggests that student capacity for management of themselves, their projects and themselves was enhanced through the learning experience. The pressures that were placed on students to perform ranged from having to learn a new system of work, finding that they had to work with colleagues they did not know well, having to interact directly with the general public and community leaders and the media, and to take on leadership roles that frequently involved having to assert control over colleagues who did not want to be controlled. Dealing with these pressure was stressful for most students but, based on their journal accounts, in every case they found positive ways of resolving dilemmas and meeting deadlines.

Taking on leadership positions within a committee gave students experience in meeting responsibilities and being accountable for their performance in the leadership or management role. From the vantage point of having to control the meeting and the agenda, most students who took on these roles reported gaining increased understanding of what is involved with management and the personal skills that enable them to endure criticism and personal attack from those who resent being managed. These insights will increase in value as students enter the workforce, work within professional teams and eventually provide leadership to others.

As the simulation progressed, tolerance of diversity and greater understanding as to why people behaved as they did, occurred within most groups. Students moved from a position of responding emotionally to all that was said and done in meetings, to a more analytical response that helped them to observe the behaviour of other committee members and then deconstruct and link it to possible explanations. Critique such as this became the most common response to situations that, at the beginning of the simulation, would have caused emotional distress. By the end of the simulation, most students were more able to explain why certain responses had occurred and could act strategically to prevent further disruption and to enhance group cohesiveness.

Chapter 5: Emerging Leadership skills and ability

When designing the simulation, I believed that student perceptions of themselves as a leaders or followers could be more a function of their knowledge and experience than some innate talent for 'natural leadership' or that they were, or were not, 'born to lead' others. This notion has been discussed more fully in Chapter one. Consequently, the structure of the simulation reflects a hope that, given sufficient motivation, information and support, any final year student could develop themselves to be an effective and credible leader as well as a capable participant within professional teams.

Student conceptualisations of leadership, as reflected upon in their journals quoted throughout this chapter, often changed as a result of their experiences as followers, as well as through providing leadership to others in an environment where they were encouraged to evaluate each other's leadership competence and to put into practice what they learned from observing their colleagues. Emphasis was placed on the role of each team member or follower and, because of the way in which the simulation was structured, most students commented on the experience of both 'leading' and 'following' at different stages of their projects. Follower behaviour can easily be associated with negative assumptions related to low self-esteem or dependency on leaders for direction, however, the experiences of the majority of students involved in this study, indicate that they participated in leader-follower roles in order to observe leader behaviour and thereby form their own decisions about role-modelling. Throughout the simulation students moved at their own pace towards undertaking leadership responsibilities and overall, little in their journals suggests that they were dependent on 'leaders' within the groups. If they participated in the group project, often their comments indicated motivations derived more from their own expectations of personal performance than from any pressure placed upon them by their colleagues.

By their final year of study, students had been introduced to the bureaucratic world of government health systems and to the hierarchical arrangement of the nursing workforce and its relationships with other health disciplines. They would also have had an opportunity to measure themselves against other students through summative assessments and tutorial group involvement. Leadership as a central idea in professional life has therefore been accepted, at least in principle, by final year students, as part of their nursing world.

From the evidence of information presented in subject handbooks, the subject internet site and also in lectures, it was reasonable to expect that students would have had the opportunity to learn about theories of leadership and what could be expected of leaders in terms of their competence. Comments throughout the students journals indicated a perception by them that there were vast differences between students in terms of leadership and management ability, commitment, personality and assertiveness. Their knowledge was evident in their journal reflections on collaboration, negotiation, advocacy, as well as ways of initiating and managing change. Coordination of teams, project and time management, consultation, handling confrontation, effective administration and conciliation of differences with colleagues were also part of the potential learning experiences in the subject and comments throughout the student journals indicated that these aspects of leadership were given particular consideration.

As I worked with the various cohorts of students in this learning experience, I was aware from student discussions, forum debates and journal entries, that for many of them the need for leaders was accepted. Questions on leadership raised by students, related more to different types of leadership and the various factors that make leaders sufficiently credible to work with and follow. As they gained experience in being leaders and observing others in leadership positions, students began to write about leadership and how they saw themselves as potential leaders with the technical proficiency needed to 'get the job done', and a certain amount of emotional fortitude and personality hardiness to cope with personal criticism. This suggests a realization on their part that having power does not necessarily make someone a leader, rather it is what a person does with power that earns them credibility while in a leadership position.

The organisational structure upon which I modelled the simulation was that of a government department where leaders are popularly elected for short-term, high profile, high-risk positions; and the longer-term, bureaucratic positions of working-party leadership are based on work-skills and determined by the group. Essentially students found themselves in a situation that, through the assessment system, rewarded those who took up leadership responsibilities, those who ensured that their work was formally acknowledged and those who were able to generate good ideas and attract the support of their colleagues for that idea.

In the simulation, there was room for both leaders and followers but extra rewards were made available for students who took on additional responsibility through leadership of

committee meetings and work associated with group projects. Briefly, formal leadership positions within the group were of two types:

- (1) committee management teams of a chairperson and secretary, who were elected by the committee to manage the committee for one week at a time, and report on their committee's achievements at the weekly student forum; and
- (2) leaders of subcommittees or working groups who were elected by the working committee, for the term of the simulation, and who ensured that the project work allocated to their subcommittee was achieved.

The subcommittee leaders reported back to the main committee meeting which met at least once a week. Extra participation points were allocated to all who took up leadership responsibilities and as a result such positions were hotly contested and those who were successful were expected by their colleagues to earn those extra points.

The nature of competition

Every student at some stage of the simulation, reflected on the nature of competition and how the simulation experiences were affecting their own behaviour and that of their colleagues. Through their personal encounters with competition, students in the simulations were able to experience the pressures associated with political behaviour, bureaucratic procedure and the benefits of establishing oneself as a competent individual within a professional team with a worthwhile and productive purpose.

A major difference between this subject and others in which the students had been involved, was that the tutorial or group work aspect was set up as a competitive environment. Rather than having student participation in tutorials marked by a tutor who assessed their prepared presentations to the group, as was usually the case for other subjects, in this subject students themselves were in control of the assessment of participation. Control of the distribution of assessment marks was held by the students who knew exactly how marks were awarded. They had every opportunity to monitor their own progress and that of their colleagues, by examining the meeting record, that is, the ratified minutes of the formal committee, which met once a week.

Predicated on the notion that success is more likely in any professional team, if all members cooperate and work well together, student individualism was only encouraged in terms of their participation and contribution to team projects. Conversely, I was strongly of the view that any team and its goals are likely to be

compromised when personal self-interest becomes the driving force and so the focus of allocating marks throughout the simulation was on the assessment of group work and individual contribution to group goals.

From the outset, students knew that the person whose name appeared most often in the minutes would be awarded 100% of the marks allocated to that part of the assessment, leaving all other students in that group, their committee, to have their recorded contributions scaled in relation to the highest scoring student. This meant that if all the work were to be left to one student whose contributions were formally acknowledged in the minutes, then that student would receive 100% and all other students in the group would fail that part of the subject assessment. Theoretically it was possible for each student's name to appear once and all would have scored the highest marks for that piece of assessment, but few students, if any, worked this out. If they did, they did not mention it in their journals and at no time did any group succeed in getting each member of their group mentioned equally in the minutes and therefore share equally in the full marks available. It was also technically possible for a student to opt out of the group process and still pass the subject because the group participation mark accounted for around twenty percent of the overall assessment for the subject.

During the previous two years of their degree program, an emphasis had been placed on clinical teamwork and the importance of harmonious working relationships in the hospital context to successful treatment and other health services. Students were surprised therefore when they found that, in the context of the simulation, their individual performances were the key to success and that there were times when efforts to maintain harmonious relationships might hinder progress towards achieving personal and group goals. Most students focused on individual effort in the first few weeks of the simulation and as they established their own profiles within the committees, they began to consider how they and others could contribute to a strong team effort.

At the beginning of semester, one or two students in each cohort expressed a desire to opt out, or escape from the simulation but in every case, these few students eventually joined in with their colleagues. An even smaller number of students questioned the ethics of using a competitive environment as part of a learning strategy but within a few weeks of the semester, these students also found that the situation was acceptable, some even commenting that they now thought it was fair.

There is no doubt from the journals that students had strong feelings about the simulation. Some expressed their dislike of the way the simulation encouraged competitiveness and others claimed to enjoy the thrill of competition, but by the second half of the semester most students claimed to be more comfortable working within a competitive environment. For these students there was journal evidence of political skill development in terms of making opportunities for themselves and others, and taking strategic steps to reduce perceived disadvantage related to the assessment system.

The approach one takes in a competitive environment is often determined by the image one has about whether or not we are able to successfully compete. In terms of readiness for competition, it was clear very early in the simulation that students had separated themselves into 'quiet' and 'loud' people categories. The 'quiet' people did not think it was fair that they should have to change their way of relating to others in order to be heard, and considerable resistance to the simulation came from those who chose to belong to this group. While many of these students were hard-working and keen to be involved in all but the leadership aspects of the projects, others were not. This other small group of students expressed little interest in what they could contribute to the projects or learn from their colleagues, and were not impressed that their individual contributions to group work would be obvious to colleagues and assessed individually. A range of political agendas held by various students from both categories led to expressions of concerns about the welfare of the 'quiet' students. Equally, growing numbers of comments indicating an irritation with the behaviour of 'loud' students were due largely to the competitive nature of the simulation. In other words, some expressions of concern for 'quiet' students were probably politically motivated.

Most students found the simulation challenging and almost every student commented in their first journal entry about feelings of inadequacy or of feeling overwhelmed. In their journals, students commented that they always felt stressed at the beginning of new subjects and the majority of students in these initial entries also expressed optimism about the subject and the way it would be conducted, with many of them indicating enthusiasm about the challenge ahead. By mid-semester most of the students who expressed feelings of inadequacy had developed confidence in their own ability to do well. In fact entries by students in the final weeks of the simulation provided overwhelming evidence that they had developed personally and professionally as a result of the competitive experiences contained in the simulation.

As students became more familiar with the rules of the simulation they were better able to ascertain the competitive or political strategies being used by their colleagues to gain personal visibility in the minutes. As a self-acknowledged 'quiet person', Leigh could feel herself being encouraged by the marking method to 'jump in' and present her own ideas.

Leigh Week 2

The group is finding it a bit easier to express ideas, but as with any group situation you always get the ones who are really outspoken and who (dare I say) take up a lot of time, interrupt and talk before the other, quieter people get a chance.

You can't help but get the feeling that, because marks are being allocated according to our contribution, some people are putting forward useless proposals and raving on about nothing, just so their name gets recorded in the minutes. This method of giving marks is good in one way (in that it encourages us to contribute) but bad in another (in that I think it will cause a lot of competitiveness).

I didn't talk much in the meeting today. A minority group of people seemed to have a bit of a stranglehold on the discussion, although, we all managed to get out ideas out. Slowly though, I think that the group as a whole is beginning to progress. My goals for the next meeting are to come up with some ideas about the presentation in general so that I am well prepared and can jump in and express them before someone else does.

Because it was up to the students to monitor their own performance and that of their competitors, an automatically heightened awareness of competitive advantage permeated the simulation. Some normally competitive students like Norah considered being even more outspoken so as to build her personal profile within the group. She also realized that she would need to access the committee minutes later to check that her efforts had been accurately recorded.

Norah Week 5

I was very vocal this week and was determined to have my name appear in the elusive minutes. I was a lot more assertive than last week and noticed a competitive streak in myself that was probably attributed to wanting to gain marks. People were throwing a lot of ideas around, myself included, and I think the secretary had trouble scribing all the proposals. I made a mental note of what I had proposed so I could check the minutes next week.

Some students did not think to check the minutes throughout the semester, to see that their contributions were mentioned. In Pearl's case, it wasn't until the full documentation of the committee meetings was carefully perused that she noticed that, in terms of visibility within the minutes, the entire project had been dominated by particular people who seemed to have worked the assessment system in their favour.

Pearl Week 14

One thing I did notice after having access to the minutes folder... is that on average it was the same people each meeting who motioned and seconded that each sub-committees reports be accepted. One person in particular nominated the most number of Chairpersons and Secretaries throughout the whole 8 weeks of committee meetings.

A critical aspect of the simulation was the election of the committee chairperson and secretary each week because of the competition between students to be nominated and then elected, thus earning extra assessment points. Weekly elections often came down to a show of hands and students who won benefited from the political skills associated with being able to lobby and form alliances with colleagues whom they then supported in return in their bid for election. For some students successful election was elusive because they had not sufficiently developed their networks. For others it was because they were competing with students who were politically astute and had ensured that they had the numbers before making their bid. After several attempts at being elected as secretary for a meeting, Pamela still was not able to garner sufficient support to win the vote, something she regarded as very unfair.

Pamela Week 10

Things are finally starting to come together as a group and in all subcommittees. Finally all our requests for resources are arriving. The whole group is feeling positive and things are more in order. I was nominated again for the management team as the secretary but again I missed out due to lack of votes. I find it very unfair that I was not given the chance to be on the team. 'It is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity' [Friere, 1972, p20].

Being outspoken also had its difficulties when one was trying to be elected to the management team. On the one hand, extra marks were awarded to those who volunteered for extra responsibility and who did extra work. On the other hand, the group had an interest in not allowing any one person to be too visible because their own marks would be scaled against the top-scoring student. How then does one deal with a situation where extra opportunities arise for both leadership and learning, and other students seem reluctant to take on the role? Sheryl reflected on the different responses of the committee to her bid to have another turn at being committee chairperson and then to her considered proposal to extend the time of the meeting.

Sheryl Week 7

One criticism of today was role confusion, and people who refuse to shut up making group cohesiveness and progress difficult. Conflict with nominations for secretary and chairman compounded the complexities of today's meetings. No- one was prepared to be chairperson or secretary. So I volunteered, anxious to correct the mistakes I had made earlier. Big

mistake. If you've ever wondered what it's like to have 19-20 people jump down your throat all at once, just ask me. Everyone was quite prepared not to be Chairperson or secretary, but for someone to be it twice, this was not on. I don't understand this mentality...

I did well today. All my proposals were aim-orientated not points. I do seem to however make enormous waves with my proposals. No one was entirely ecstatic about extending the meeting. However, the recognition by most that it was necessary led to it being accepted. I am pleased that at least in this respect our group's dedication to success shows. Perhaps that's why today's meeting was so hellish.

One of the students who opposed Sheryl's bid for chair was Charmaine who was convinced that justice could be preserved and people who were self-serving could be prevented from succeeding at the expense of less vocal people such as herself.

Charmaine Week 7

I believe that every committee member should get a chance of being a chairperson or secretary, before people go back for a second go. By doing this everyone will get the experience of running a meeting and group marks will be more evenly spread. I know that I am not the most outspoken person in our committee however I often have my own views and proposals worth sharing with the class, but am unable to voice these ideas due to the outspoken people not giving me a chance. I suppose that I should be more outspoken if I really want more marks and I don't really blame these people for wanting to gain top marks, however, I am not the type of person who could be outspoken and selfish among fellow committee members.

Interestingly, while Charmaine resisted Sheryl's bid for a second turn at chairing the meeting, it was noticed by others that Charmaine did not want to do it herself. Angela thought she would also have liked to try the position again, now that she was no longer afraid. In a way, she empathised with Charmaine.

Angela Week 10

I noticed that Charmaine declined from being secretary again. She is always hesitant to be a part of the management team. I would jump at the chance if I could do it again. It is funny to think how when we first started I said I would never do it. It reflects that I am not as scared any more. The meetings have helped me to overcome my fear. Perhaps this is why Charmaine declines all the time. She does seem very quiet and doesn't say much. It sounds just like I was!

Predictably, student committee meetings were quite disorganized during the first few weeks of semester as few had had prior experience of meeting procedures and roles. Contributing to the situation was the enthusiasm of outspoken students who wanted to be elected to leadership positions and have their names recorded in the minutes. The scene was set for good-natured but boisterous interaction between people driven by a range of competitive interests.

John Week 1

The first general meeting that took place was very unorganised...There were several motions put forward by various people in the group because we still did not understand the formal structure of the meeting. All the more confident or outspoken people were proposing in order to get marks allocated. I felt as though I would never be able to gain any marks in this subject because of this. I only got in a couple of seconds towards my name. Finally someone proposed that subcommittees be formed and I was allocated the role of ... manager.

From this meeting I left feeling nervous about the subject. I was worried about having to be placed in the role of chairman or placed in the role of secretary since it involved a presentation to the class in a lecture on Monday morning. I also felt as though my role was undefined. I left not knowing exactly where I stood and what I have to do.

There was no doubt in students' minds that the environment was competitive from the very first meeting. Mairi and Judith talk about the simulation being exciting and challenging even though in the following quotes they both talk about their disappointment at the selfishness and lack of teamwork that their committee members displayed during the first week of the simulation. Even so they found some room for more optimism and, in Mairi's case, even enjoyment of the dynamic nature of the first meeting.

Mairi Week 1

Throughout the meeting I sensed a 'dog eat dog' atmosphere. Everyone was out to get as many points for themselves. Personally I thought the whole affair was pathetic. I do understand that marking must be conducted in some way. This isn't the right way! With points awarded for every proposal and second I noticed no one was genuinely thinking of their proposals and definitely not thinking when seconding !!

For some reason the whole goings on is disturbing me. If this 'out for self' attitude continues I'm sure a lack of unity will develop amongst members of the committee. In a group, individuals can't get all for themselves. If such actions occur what is best as a group is overlooked for what is best for oneself. Apart from this annoying aspect I really find the electricity and involvement throughout the meeting exciting and extremely challenging.

Judith Week 1

One concern is the competitive aspect of the group. The need to fight each other and compete for marks does seem to create a room full of people who are unwilling to give everybody an opportunity to have a say. Hopefully our need to work as a team will overcome the competitiveness and we will be able to have a good time preparing our program as well as presenting it. It will be interesting to see how attitudes change in the coming weeks.

In the heady days of the first few weeks, competition stimulated some students while others like Ros could see no logic in what was happening. Some of the decisions that were made were ill-advised in her view and while initially she opted out of the

competition, her reflections led her to plan a way to be more competitive in future meetings.

Ros Week 1

In our meeting some of the subcommittees were decided on and it seemed like a bit of a mad rush to be part of something. Since learning of the marking criteria this subject whereby the number of times your name appears in the minutes is equal to your final mark only added to the chaos. Marking of this group is going to be interesting, because if other meetings are the same as this first one, it will be clear that all that this score system achieves is inner group competition rather than group collaboration and cohesion.

I left the meeting feeling like I was about to explode because all decisions that were made were made in haste and without thought. When deciding who would be in which committee it was a rush decision. There was simply no logic in this. Surely it would have been better to have those wanting to be in a committee express their reasons why and define their role, rather than simply racing in and proposing and seconding the motion... We all brainstormed ideas and pretty much came up with nothing, decided it was something we all had to think about... Note, I must start making a list of good proposals for future meetings.

Competition seemed to inspire and, at the same time, worry some of the more outspoken students. The underpinning motivation for these comments related to 'winning', but rival agendas contained within the learning environment obliged students to consider the differences between individual competitive behaviour within committees and the growing competition between groups to develop the best project and present it to the community.

Confident in their own ability to compete with their colleagues, some students expressed concerns that the 'race' was not completely fair and that some students did not have what it takes to compete. Rowena, early in the simulation, had emerged as a leader of her group and from her journal entries much of her status appeared to be as a result of relationship patterns developed among a group of students who had studied together for some time. Rowena was protective of the quieter students in this group and was comfortable that everyone knew 'their place' in the class. In her view, a type of equity had developed as a result. True to what she perceived to be her leadership responsibilities, she canvassed the views of other students on the problem of how to manage the 'quiet ones'.

Rowena Week 1

I don't know why the tutor has picked this layout for the classes, however so far it appears that it may work in that it may provide a way for our management skills to become more organized...I have great concerns however, for the format of this class in that we are all close friends that

have shared a class tut group for about 18 months now. We all know our place in the class and therefore everybody tends to get a say. BUT there has never been points given for basically the person who says the most and thus this will surely throw chaos into our group and perhaps even upset the normal functioning of others where this point scoring is not the case. I personally think that the point system should be worked another way as I consider myself a big mouth and try hard not to dominate all conversations thus, rewarding me for speaking can't be good.

Two days later:

Today I spoke to some other classes about the point scoring. They also agree it is unfair and suggested a way around it would be to make sure that everything everybody does goes down into the minutes, although this has some problems in that the quiet ones don't acknowledge any work that they have done.

Rowena's observation that some students did not acknowledge the work they did was in fact one of the primary reasons for my setting up the assessment and marking criteria in this way. A cultural feature of nursing for decades has been that nurses do not flaunt the work that they do and have not sought acknowledgement from others for their work. Consequently nurses have contributed to a type of political invisibility that has undermined that profession's ability to capture and control resources essential to the performance of their own nursing roles and to reward the nurses who remain committed to a nursing career. The marking criteria brought students to a choice between seeking acknowledgment of their work or remaining invisible. While Mariah was dubious about the way the assessment was set up and also concerned about the 'quieter people', she remained hopeful that progress would occur.

Mariah Week 1

The quieter people in the committee found it difficult to get a word in as everyone had different ideas that had to be said. The whole meeting, I thought, was utter confusion... all order broke down yet again after someone said 'Any ideas? With a little extra help with control from Tracey and the chairperson, we got back to formal proceedings and a few suggestions came out that were workable.

The whole hour was fairly tense due to the competition to have a say and I don't really think anyone enjoyed it at all. If this meeting is any indication of how the rest are going to go then we are in trouble! Then again, it's only our first and there is plenty of time for improvement and progress.

By the second week of the simulation some students were still having difficulty competing for assessment points in their committee. John, for instance, who in other aspects of student activity was quite assertive, found that the only means available to him for scoring points was to deliver on the work allocated to his subcommittee, but for some reason, the committee was not allocating sufficient work for him to do.

John Week 2

The second meeting seemed to go along fine. Although once again I did not get to propose any motions or even second them. As I could see everyone in the group was biding for points and the more points they could get the further they went. Also by this time I realized that my job as a member of the Subcommittee depended heavily on the other groups informing us of what they need. I felt that a lot of the proposing done by members in the group was repetitive and not in the best interest of the group. I could also see people who began to try and assert their authority by being the most outspoken member in the group... I also felt there was a lot of proposing, accepting without proper discussing on the matter.

From the point of view of one of the 'victors', being able to compete strongly and hold the attention of colleagues during meetings was central to survival in this competitive environment. Bert realized that he was a 'main player' now that he had debated points against strong opposition and believed that he had gained the support of his committee. His feelings of power and victory led to some critical reflection on whether his assertive approach was in fact proper when some people seem to be content to observe rather than engage in competition. Although he had been immersed in the culture of nursing for a little over two years, he seemed to have become aware of the general reluctance of nurses to be competitive or as he puts it, 'scabbing points'. Ultimately, his reflections led him to a position where he thought competition contributed to productivity overall.

Bert Week 3

I was quite proud of myself today, we had a discussion ... There was about four or five speakers for the idea, and I was the only one against. When it came to the vote more people voted against the idea, than for it. One small victory for me. In today's meeting I was really dominant, by starting to get used these meetings I am really getting to be able to give my own input. But to some degree, I could be accused of scabbing points. The power of going after marks to be gained is sometimes hard to control, but I feel most of my input was of good value.

Later that week:

One thing these meeting have really showed me, is that there are people who are dominant and those people who do not show any dominance at all. It has become really obvious who the dominant people are in our group, but some people in our group are almost plain spectators. And among these power struggles, I admit now I am one of the main players. But I don't feel this is a bad thing, in a way it produces better productivity.

Despite many groups experiencing tension and frustration with bureaucratic rules, competition for visibility and the pressure to perform as a group, some evidence of team organisation and commitment to the project was emerging within a few weeks into the semester. Students at this stage were beginning to reflect on the array of pressures that were causing them to think in different ways about their own approaches

to individual and team work, their responsibilities to the university and to the community group for whom they were developing the project. Every student was keenly aware of the heightened level of energy arising out of the competitive atmosphere and some were interested in ensuring that this energy be captured and used wisely. Ken, for example, welcomed the energy that competition had generated within his team but he also realized that this energy needed to be managed so that the team could benefit.

Ken Week 3

This meetings showed that we were finally getting organized ... This is important because it means that we can begin to tangibly measure our progress toward the presentation. More importantly it meant that the pressure was on us to perform with regard to our prospective groups. This meant that we were accountable for our actions or inactions. I believe it would be fair to say that it showed interest in making a genuine contribution to the group, even though some of us may be going about it a an unproductive way. I put this interaction down to the vigorous competitive spirit within the group. How can this vital energy be channelled in a manner that is constructive to group objectives? We have got to start thinking as a group and not as individuals.

The chaos of meetings and the need to compete were factors that many of the once quiet students had to confront in order to make sense of the simulation. As the competitive spirit increased, often the veneer of justice and equity fell away to reveal what some students were willing to do to gain or maintain status, influence and control. Many students commented on the surprise they felt in seeing colleagues whom they though they knew well, behaving in these ways simply to win. Marjorie's comments were typical of those made by other students, as she observed the behaviour of her colleagues and calculated her position within the group in terms of influence.

Marjorie Week 5

I DON'T LIKE COMMITTEES! Well I didn't like today's meeting anyway. You really find out who are the powerful ones in the group and who are the weak ones. I think I'm one of the weak ones in the group. It's like the powerful ones in the group decide on something, and that is it (they've sort of got the final say in things). Also most people are only saying things (proposing and seconding things) without even thinking about what they are doing or saying. They are only in it to get as many points as they can get.

How can a committee run when everyone is only concerned with their marks? We are not going to get anything productive done if this is what is always going to happen. There was also an inappropriate use of authority used at today's meeting. The chairperson shot someone down for basically doing nothing. It was as if the chairperson wanted all the attention directed at her and no one else.

Some students were still grappling with the way competition was affecting personal relationships that had been regarded as stable. Marilyn began to wonder if similar problems were occurring beyond her committee group.

Merilyn Week 5

Committee meetings are the worst things ever invented and I don't see why we have to have them when all we do is fight. Our group just doesn't get along. It was the second meeting today and we got nowhere but arguments. Today you saw another side to some people, people that you thought were quite and really nice. Well, they became aggressive and dominant. One of the main problems is the marking of the committee meetings because we were told that you got one mark for proposing an idea and half a mark for seconding the idea. This caused a couple of people in our group to propose anything and there were about 5 people who were just yelling out that they second it, they might not have even heard it or even understood it, but they still seconded it. This has caused a lot of problems because these proposals have been seconded without any discussion about the idea. This is going to cause a lot of problems if it continues.

I wonder if all the committee groups are like ours or if they get along. There has to be a better way to conduct these committee meetings because if this keeps going on we're not going to get anywhere.

It took a few meetings for most student groups to set up their subcommittee structure, elect some of their colleagues to leadership roles and allocate project work. Once each committee reached this stage of its development, there was a marked reduction in rowdy behaviour and the emphasis appeared in most instances to shift from individual competitiveness to getting the work done for the presentation.

It was interesting for me to observe the changes to group interactions that this shift brought about. Some groups seemed to accept that the project would now carry them all to the end and that no further refinement was needed of the processes or design of the event. Most of the groups continued to take a keen interest in 'getting it right' so that the end product, their presentation to the community, would be as good as they could manage. Much of the difference in these group interactions can be attributed to the extent to which the group leaders sustained their interest in the project, but also there were elements of early leaders feeling the pressure of competition coming from their previously pliable colleagues. Rowena had been concerned earlier about the competitiveness that had been present in her group had come to discuss with me whether there was any real need for her group to take the project as seriously as some other groups seemed to be doing.

Rowena Week 4

I felt that this weeks tutorial went extremely well...I feel that the reason Tracey said that we would feel better about the point scoring is that we really no longer have any decisions to make, most of them are already done and now it only leaves action. Thus no competition for points for proposing and seconding... Even though Tracey says that we are just rafting while the others are sailing, I think she says that to all the groups.

And I also think that at our lecture when we had to get up and present an overhead of our topic and objectives Tracey was quiet impressed.

After weeks of canvassing opinion, consulting with me and others and generally trying to preserve her group in a way that protected the status quo as far as leaders and followers were concerned, Rowena experienced a breakthrough in understanding as she journalled.

Rowena Week 6

I realize now the importance of the formal meeting rather than just a normal tutorial. A normal tut would be caos, at least this way the chairperson can pull the class into line a little bit. However, I still can't reflect on any advantages of the point scoring system for seconding a motion - Oh, hang on. It has just become obvious (the light just came on). For weeks I have been winging about the slacko's in the class...The point scoring system is designed so that the people who really are doing the work are getting the points thus the need for the folder with activity sheets and the low assessment mark for the actual project on the day itself. Imagine that - I was hoping you'd come thru with the goods Tracey.

Across the different groups 'blind competitiveness' eventually abated and in its place was a growing sense of shared purpose that harnessed the individual drive of students. Sandra noticed this change in group behaviour and welcomed the fact that there was less argument and more eagerness to get the group presentation ready.

Sandra Week 7

This meeting was a very quiet meeting. There doesn't seem to be any room for arguing about proposals and the like any more... I'm glad the group has settled down. There was so much unproductive argument in the beginning due mainly to the marking system everyone making proposals left, right and centre, that no one knew what was really going on. Even though the meetings have become quieter and there is less argument this does not mean the group has lost its enthusiasm for the project, if anything the eagerness has increased because the blind competitiveness has gone in place of a desire to get the job done.

By mid-semester most committee groups were beginning to work creatively together, and also to compete in ways that set higher standards and demanded greater productivity. Ken reflected on how his group was now approaching the task of preparing their project for presentation to the community in just a few short weeks. His appreciation of healthy competition had returned.

Ken Week 7

The group is functioning well, and all members are happy with progress. This is a reflection of the amount of work that each group is doing. It all seems to be coming together and taking shape. I almost get the impression that groups now are competing but in a positive way in that each is trying to outdo the other in what they can contribute to the presentation. This is healthy competition. The boundaries of each group had been decided.

There was no competing for the same issues. Members were now engrossed in their own areas of concern and offers of assistance to other groups were gathering.

Each week, as the groups presented their progress reports to the forum the 'healthy competition' that Ken had described was quite noticeable. Each of the groups gave support to the two members delivering their reports and most students listened attentively to the accounts being given by other teams. The weekly forums provided students with a reference point for their own performance as a team and while there was no competition for assessment marks between the groups, it became very obvious that the groups had begun to compete in terms of their progress and also the quality of presentations to the combined forum.

Lillian Week 5

At the forum everyone was nervous. Those who were not reporting were relieved to sit quietly and listen... A highly competitive atmosphere seemed to increase the level of nervousness that traveled further than just the chairperson and secretary. It was like the entire committee was down there with our representatives. Everyone read too much, spoke too softly and waffled too much. One thing about the forum is interesting. It seemed to compel our committee even further into enthusiasm to excel. Nothing like a bit of good competition! But today's forum was a disappointment.

Pearl understood that groups were being caught up in the competitive spirit, and as she listened to the group reports in the forums she could not help but evaluate the progress being made by each group in comparison with her own.

Pearl Week 5

Went to the forum yesterday. There are some fairly interesting topics floating around. Some of the other groups seem to be well organized at this early stage and others are not so well organized. Things got a little monotonous after a while...I guess the idea of a group forum where all the committees meet to discuss their progress (or lack of) is a good idea, but I'm not really interested in what other groups are doing. I would like to get our committee up and rolling before I listen to anyone else's ideas. I suppose it will be interesting to see what successes and problems other committees are having in comparison with our own successes and hitches. Knowing the people in my committee, I doubt very much whether we will be giving away too many secrets, I wonder if the same can be said about other committees?

The forums became events where ideas and plans for presentations were shared and also where problems arising from other ideas were opened up for discussion and suggestions. As the semester proceeded the forums seemed to be places where ideas were gathered rather than shared, and Peggy was not alone in observing this phenomenon.

Peggy Week 7

During the presentation of the forum where our progresses and aims were discussed, we found that when we shared our ideas about what we were creating, other groups in the following weeks had adopted the same approach. This created a little annoyance within our committee as hard work, time and input were provided to gain these ideas. This was something that we would have to act on promptly and stop before it went any further.

Most students had become aware of the competition that was occurring between the groups and many of the students identified the forum presentations as the source of the problem of having good ideas 'stolen'. The ethical dilemmas associated with this situation prompted students like Dean, to question the motives of colleagues when they proposed to copy the work of another group. The consequences for him may well have been linked to his being overlooked by the group later in the semester when project presentation roles were allocated.

Dean Week 7

Today the idea of [an activity for the presentation] was brought up for discussion, I opposed this greatly as it was in the forum, another group already had the idea and it just looked like we were copying. Anyway it was proposed and seconded before I could speak against it. I opposed anyway and appealed to the chairperson with no result. When looking back I feel I was in the right and I had the right to oppose the motion and perhaps in a committee where there are no marks up for grabs the seconding would not be so quick and I would have been able to speak on why I oppose the motion.

I felt very frustrated over this issue and I basically thought about ways of resolving my personal conflict regarding this issue. Basically I thought about the idea... but I still think we were copying another group. Also parts for the presentation ...were given out. I would have liked to have a part but I wasn't nominated. Really I should have voiced my desire to have a part as no-one is a mind reader.

Many of the groups took the decision to present their work in ways that did not advantage the competition. While other students were aware of the potential for ideas to be copied, not all were worried about it. For them, it simply added to the excitement of the competition.

Mariah Week 7

I felt I had to comment on this forum as it seems there is a bit of a pattern going on. As in the past weeks people have said what they are planning to do, it appears the week after, another group comes up with an idea similar to one someone came up with earlier. It's a conspiracy! I have also noticed that we are much further ahead as far as progress goes. This was a surprise to me as I thought we were moving slowly along. Again I have to consider the possibility that we will get this done and done well!

The final forum for the semester was where the presenting teams were urged to be more open about their presentations and to share with the rest of the students some of the stories associated with managing the project.

Millie Week 12

Today, being the last forum, was extremely interesting. Interesting in the fact that we were able to learn all the other groups' secrets...Overall the forums were interesting to attend, to learn how other groups were functioning and how they were progressing towards their goals. I think it gave every group a standard to work by and made individual members consider what work and contributions they should be effectively doing. This being so that their group will effectively keep up with all the others. Forums were definitely an important component of the committee process.

Team building

Broadly described, teams are groups of people who work towards fulfilling a common purpose. Teams can take the form of committees, working groups, task-forces or even organisational groupings. Team building generally involves setting up a group of people to accomplish a particular task by regarding all members of the team as resources to be applied to the task. The success of teams can depend on the establishment of relationships between team members that will enable each of them to perform well and contribute to the team's goals. Processes involved in building teams are the same in whatever context the team is needed to be set up and can include communication, decision-making, problem solving, work allocation, and the establishment of quality control and accountability systems. However before any of this can occur, all members of the team will have to negotiate their roles within the group so that the most appropriate people are performing the roles at which they can excel. These roles may change over time in changing circumstances and with every new role, team members can have opportunities to increase their awareness of the benefits of team building.

It did not take long for most students to realize that even though they were in a competitive environment, they would have to work as a team if the project were to succeed. Working together when one feels uncertain as to what was expected, as well as lacking in confidence about how other students would perform was a source of some comment by students as they reflected on their first week of semester.

In this simulation, quite apart from the creation of a formal committee structure, rules and bureaucratic language, which provided some consistency in how the project team was to do its work, students also needed to manage themselves and each other if they

were to be able to accomplish the team's goals. Zerwekh and Claborn (1994) believe that nurses are encouraged through their education and practical learning, to anticipate problems and to take steps to prevent their development or to minimise the adverse consequences that might arise. My own experience is similar and I believe it is easy for nurses to focus on potential weaknesses in individuals when one is anxious about group work, or worried that colleagues might make a mistake or opt out of their contribution to the project. I have observed similar emphasis in the way clinical subjects were taught with a learning accent on detecting and correcting problems. I realized that for the students to succeed in the teamwork situation it would be necessary for them to overcome a focus on problems and instead, identify the strengths of each member and encourage their colleagues to perform well. It was also necessary that students learn to appreciate their own strengths and be able to adapt their behaviour in a way that allowed them and their colleagues to experience feelings of worth and satisfaction. Without these shifts in team perspectives I believed that there was a danger that work might not be assigned wisely and as a consequence, the project would suffer.

It was also necessary that the simulation mimicked the professional situation of working in teams with people who have a similar background to oneself, but with whom one may not be personally acquainted. Of course sometimes friends were lucky enough to be placed in the same group while others found that they had to learn to work closely with people that they had never really got to know despite being in the same cohort for over two years. For example, in the following quote, Kerlyn anticipated problems being in a large group and working with people she did not know well.

Kerlyn Week 1

I was immediately interested by the content of the subject and the way in which Tracey presents it. We are to work together our entire tutorial group to prepare and present an educational and thought stimulating piece of work to [the community group]....Within our group there are a number of people I have never really got to know in the past two years, knowing them only by their first name. I do however anticipate there to be many problems in working with a group of this size. In my past experience of working in a group of 2 or 3 people there are often clashing ideas, domination by one person, and conflicts regarding the distribution of workload. I feel this will be an inevitable part of working together with such a large number of people.

In some cohorts there were large numbers of students who needed to be placed within a limited number of tutorial groups in the final year because of the resource constraints under which the faculty was operating. In the earlier years of their degree program, group numbers were kept to around twelve or fifteen students and tutorial activities were arranged in an orderly way to allow all students to have a turn at whatever activity

the subject assessment required. In this final year, and especially in unusually large cohorts, it was possible for students to be placed in a group of up to thirty members, however such a large group was unusual. The size of the community projects and the work associated with developing and presenting projects to community groups ensured that there was plenty of work to occupy members of even quite large groups.

Some of the student responses to working collaboratively within a larger group indicated that many had misgivings, especially those who preferred to work on their own. Beth, for instance, had not had positive experiences of group work and this, combined with having to work with an unusually large group, meant that she was feeling challenged from the start.

Beth Week 1

I've just been told about the Community Development Project and my first thoughts are - OH NO!! On the whole talking to people after being told of the requirements of this topic, people are hoping they are in a good group. I was concerned that our group may not work as a group. I also felt some hesitation in working in such a large group. My main concerns are that either people won't pull their weight; or, with such a large group, it's sometimes hard to get everyone to agree; and you can't go ahead on a subject, you must wait till we meet and wait for others to do their part. I think I am a person who prefers to work on my own. However, I do realize that when I am nursing I will be part of a larger team and I will need to work with that team for the benefit of my clients. On the whole I feel challenged at the prospect of doing the group work and going into the community will be a great experience.

Ilze realized that in order to get organized and to complete the project in the time allotted they would need to develop work relationships. She was less than confident about her team's ability to get to know each other because there were so many members.

Ilze Week 1

Working in a committee. This is a relatively new concept to me and even though I have an overall positive outlook on this whole experience, I am experiencing quite a few doubts. Initially, I do not know how well thirty people will work together. Today was our first committee meeting and already we have to start arranging our community development project. After all, this group has never worked together before and in three months the group must get to know each other and become organized in order to compile a professional project.

Being in a large group of students with whom she had had little previous contact made Millie feel apprehensive about speaking up and participating in decision-making processes. She hoped that team building processes would help the committee to work more effectively on the decisions they faced.

Millie Week 1

Being the first time the group met today, I noted that everyone had their own individual opinions and ideas on what they thought was a good topic to present to the target group. Although some people, including myself, seemed to be a little apprehensive about expressing views to people who they had not really been in contact with previously. Although I feel as everyone gets to know one another better and also know and understand the workings of the committee itself, these apprehensive feelings will no longer occur and be present, and will make the group decision making even more effective than it was today.

Some students, such as Cydne, who had had prior experience with committees and project work, were quick to identify the problems that teams faced in building an effective working relationship. Even though she had experienced tutorial groups for at least two years, in Cydne's view, this subject was unusual in requiring group work.

Cydne Week 1

Another observation was that there was obviously a lack of good group dynamics. This means we didn't seem to know how to work or relate in a group situation. I must say we will need to improve this or it will make completing our project a hard task. The problem here surfaces because we are all different individuals having varying ideas and thoughts which hinder interaction. Another reason for this situation maybe we aren't used to working in the context of a group so it becomes a challenge to interact.

As team building commenced, a range of individual and group problems and barriers emerged to hamper the process but also to provide students involved in the simulation with real-life experiences. Sources of tension within the teams were as varied as the teams themselves. Individual student personalities blended within groups to create team environments that either strengthened the resolve of team members to do well, or undermined the commitment various members had about the project. Leigh was particularly concerned about the effect of individual behaviours on the ability of the team to establish itself and to do well.

Leigh Week 3

Overall, our group's progress lost speed after today. The tension in the meeting seemed to take over. It was a bit of a shock to see how the dynamics of how the group interacts can affect our progress so much. I realized today that teamwork is very important in a situation such as ours. If the group does not interact well with each other, the teamwork falters, so does the groups progress and much time is wasted. This is exactly what happened to us today.

Many students commented on the difficulties associated with team building and Alice's journal entry below was typical of these. Not only did students have problems setting up work systems in a sensible way, but in Alice's view, there seemed to be a need for considerable compromise.

Alice Week 1

The general business of today's meeting was mainly focused on the division of the committee into subsystems. The first subsystems were evolved through division according to which presentation group you wished to be in. The method of division was not really fair because it started from the other side of the room and by the time it got to the other side (where I was sitting) you had to select on the basis of filling up 'left over' groups rather than what you really wanted. I got into one group; although I wanted to be in the other group due to the fact that the information was fresh in my mind. But I know that working in a group requires a great deal of compromise.

Very few students fully appreciated what being allocated to work groups entailed and it was not until most groups were well established that, like Judith, they began to realize that the allocation of responsibilities within their teams could have been done more wisely.

Judith Week 5

The skill mix of the committee members is broad but unfortunately we are not using our members skills to our advantage. Probably because we are not aware that we are a talented group of people. Some of our members are good leaders, others have the ideas and others still are good organizers but despite access to all these talented people the committee is not progressing very effectively towards its goal.

Ros had initially avoided being in a subcommittee because she did not approve of the competition involved, but she soon realized that extra assessment marks were being allocated through subcommittee work. In her bid to overcome the effects of her earlier resistance to joining a group, Ros hoped to find a way to be more visible and to advance her own interests while preserving the team focus.

Ros Week 3

I need to be on a subcommittee, as those who are in one are getting extra points each week for general meeting business. I don't like the marking scheme for this subject. Everyone is fighting for marks and this makes group cohesion difficult. We are improving however and there have been no major arguments yet. I hope that we can all see past our individual needs and work for the benefit of the group. I hope that I can manage to do both.

Compromise and tolerance were not in plentiful supply in most student groups and in every cohort of students there were occasional outbreaks of conflict between people with strong personalities. Team building under such circumstances was difficult and not helped by having the chairperson and secretary rotating each week. In most instances there emerged committee members who voluntarily took on buffering roles that brought cohesion and peace to the 'warring' factions, so that the project could proceed. As a general rule, the people who took up these 'buffer' roles, were not regarded by their

peers as being outspoken or dominating personalities. Many of these 'peacemakers', like Binny, frequently approached me for individual support and guidance as to how they could soothe their sometimes savage committees.

Binny Week 3

It remains to be seen whether individuals can put their ego trips and personality differences to one side and get on with the job at hand. The optimist in me wants to believe that cohesiveness and cooperation in working towards a common goal is possible, but now and again, the cynic rears its ugly head and reminds me that human nature is fickle and unpredictable and inexplicably drawn to conflict, like metal to a magnet. I have attempted to persist in my self-appointed role as peacemaker between the factoring groups, at the risk of appearing passive and wishy-washy to the other members. I feel it is important for the survival of the group's integrity and to safeguard the essence of group morale, that all members are given equal encouragement and reassurance that their contributions are worthwhile and appreciated.

The competition for marks soon reached fever pitch and after several weeks of energetic debate and intellectual commitment, some of the traditionally outspoken students were starting to realize the consequences of decisions made earlier and in haste. Sheryl also realized that it was up to all students to develop a working environment that would enable the team to build.

Sheryl Week 4

Today, I realized that when something is seconded it's gone. This was a hard lesson... I feel that there's going to be conflict regarding group and leadership accountability. However, I am early in my judgements and must try and put them aside and develop a constructive working environment. I was impressed with our leader though. I felt she has responsibility and will hold our group together.

A few groups continued to be plagued by interpersonal conflict, making organisation and team cohesion difficult to achieve. Try as they might, some groups found that some members continued to put their own needs ahead of the work that the group needed to do, and Robert, whose comments were typical of students in this situation, worried about the ability of the group to succeed if these members continued to behave in this way.

Robert Week 6

When discussing how each group is coping with committee team work it seems that like in our group there has been a small amount of goals and aims established. But overall, arguments within each group reign supreme. It seems to stem from the fact everybody is really concerned about individual marks rather than working as a group. The conclusion that I have drawn from this is that committee work will take a period of time to settle down before everyone will work on a group level. But I still have some

concern about a handful of people in the group I am working with as I believe they are only out for personal gain and not a group gain.

Later that week...

Today's meeting was a lot more subdued than the previous week. There seems to be a group effort to put the previous weeks events behind them and move on. The hostility within the group is still at a high but has decreased slightly from the previous Thursday. The committee however has slowly drawn together, each of us having assigned ourselves to different tasks. Overall the meeting was productive but it did unearth several new splits and clashes of personality within the group.

Even outspoken students like Lydia, realized that personal self-interest was not helping the group to achieve its goals and without organisation and focus, she could not see how the committees could do their work.

Lydia Week 5

At this meeting there was so much conflict. This meeting made only one thing clear, and that was the fact that our group is very unorganised. The group is worried about little insignificant things. It is obvious that there are too many headstrong, stubborn people in our group not willing to be flexible even if it is for the group as a whole benefit. To be honest, I am one of these stubborn people. I was assigned as subcommittee group leader, and I am responsible for certain things. I like to be left to do my job and not have other subcommittees overstep their line, and want to take over my role. I feel that I'm doing my best for the group, and I don't interfere in other subcommittee's decisions in their role. I am grateful that within my subcommittee we work well together, as we just focus on fulfilling our role and doing it well.

For most other groups at this stage of the simulation a sense of purpose and even comradeship was developing as the projects began to take shape and the team management tasks seemed to be less complicated. Jack, who only two weeks before had decided to become more personally involved, felt now that his committee was working well.

Jack Week 6

Finally, I can feel that the entire committee is seeing some results in its work. Each subcommittee appears to be working well with headway being made. Nevertheless, we are feeling what may be considered as much pressure as what the other committees are experiencing. However, from what I have heard, we as a group may be working more efficiently - I couldn't agree more. As a participant in this group, I feel a sense of comradeship has developed. Of course, some minor arguments have arisen, but these have rarely been taken out of the committee meetings and if so, were resolved by the following week.

Holly also welcomed the subsidence of arguing over big issues but found it interesting that her committee was now getting stuck on trivial matters.

Holly Week 6

Our meeting this week was run very well, with decisions being made without any arguing or infighting. The only problem this week is that the minor decisions such as whose place the rehearsal will be at, are taking longer than necessary to make. We are well able to make the major decisions now, but the smaller ones are 'too easy' and seem to confuse us. Overall, the process is going well and everything seems to be going well, much better than some other groups, this will make our group feel really good.

In any work group the interaction of individuals within the group can be the source of motivation to do well, or a reason to lay blame for lack of progress. If team building processes are to work effectively then all members of the team have to contribute in positive ways to the team environment. When harmony and equity of workloads are missing, individuals within the team may feel less inclined to remain committed to the project. Moira was especially concerned that a few destructive members of the group were endangering the project, so she approached me privately to discuss ways that she could influence the group to overcome this threat. My response was to assist her to clarify her understanding of the influences at play in the situation, and to encourage her to provide constructive leadership to the committee.

Moira Week 7

We have a problem. The group is not at all collaborating and working as a team. Our communication and interpersonal skills are not at all being utilised. There are very destructive members who are not at all helping the group and no-one seems organized. Today I was the only one who presented a proposal that was organized and had a person to second it all ready. I suggested at the meeting that everyone be more organized in their subcommittees, so they can participate more effectively at committee meeting. Let's hope it works...

Later that day:

I had a meeting with Tracey about the group. She agrees with my concerns. That is the group is not working as a team and meetings are becoming too personal. She helped me sum up my feelings of frustration with the group as 'it is difficult to soar like an eagle when you are working with turkeys.' HOW TRUE!! I'm definitely learning a lot about working with a team, and how difficult it can be when only a few of the group are actually working toward a goal.

I have my fingers and everything else possible crossed in hope for change in our group. I'm helping as much as I can, physically and mentally with this change. If change doesn't occur we will be in dire straits. I'm really amazed that over the past three years all of us have learned about team work, collaboration, group processes and everything else and no-one in our group can utilise these learned skills. Maybe they have forgotten, or it is lost in their memory and needs a wake-up call.

Team building processes seemed to be more successful in subcommittee groups where smaller teams worked together on parts of the larger project and reported back

to the committee each week. Subcommittee meetings were arranged and held by students without the presence of a tutor unless one was requested. The work of these subcommittees related to tasks apportioned by the decisions of the project committee which, after several weeks of the simulation, took on the role of receiving reports from subcommittees and debating broad issues pertaining to the actual presentation and logistics associated with the day.

Mairi Week 8

I really enjoy these subcommittee meetings. It feels that each member is readily putting in equal amounts of effort... We all appear to work well together possessing a similar level of expectations of the health promotion day. Unlike other subcommittees in our committee there is no rivalry. Any questions, discussion or disputes are presented constructively! These attitudes and behaviours have been the secret to our success as a subcommittee. Looking back on the minutes we have achieved a great amount of things and they have all been of what I feel is good quality! This is so good to see. Thinking back to our first committee meeting, if we all continued to function within a meeting solely for our own benefit, I'd predict such harmony and cooperation with such good results would not occur!

At the end of week eight students realized that between then and the presentation, a holiday break and a clinical practice placement would seriously reduce the time available to prepare for the presentation. Most groups were close to completion and were working well. Estelle observed a distinct change away from the selfishness that had been a feature of her group in the early weeks of the simulation.

Estelle Week 8

This meeting was very successful as we all worked as a team. It was getting close to the holidays and we all knew we had to pull together if we were going to make the presentation a success. Working as a team is hard when you are in a group of 20 people, it is difficult to decide on things and reach an agreement. But when you have no choice in the matter everybody forgets that they are an individual in competition with everyone else, and they work together to achieve a good mark for the group. At the beginning of this project everybody was working for themselves, now they are happy to be part of a group.

Students in other teams also noticed that colleagues were prepared to compensate for weaker members of the team in order to ensure that team cohesion and productivity was not compromised. The positive relationships generated by sharing the work and a collective commitment to the project, were noticed by most students. Jean went so far as describing this development in terms of 'kinship'.

Jean Week 11

Power became a real problem at this meeting. Ava was chairperson but didn't really push her position at the meeting, letting it get out of hand at times with few motions being passed. The supporting nature of the group

however, did alleviate this problem. The weakness of the chair was remedied by everyone keeping the meeting moving, by putting suggestions forward and discussing issues as a whole group. This demonstrated a real group continuity and kinship.

On the day of the presentation, Lydia, who had despaired early in the semester about the lack of cooperation and bickering within her committee, was proud to be part of the team. She was especially impressed with the change in attitude evident in some of her colleagues.

Lydia Week 13

This morning I was very nervous, but at the same time confident that we would do a good job. As I entered the venue I saw my team mates. I became excited about our presentation. Everyone worked well together. It was not important what subcommittee team anyone was in any more, instead we all got in together to get the show on the road. The presentation was excellent, the speakers did a great job, and the student interaction with the clients was also great. I was very proud to be part of the team. Luckily our group works well under pressure and can work miracles in just days or this presentation would have not looked professional enough. If our presentation was of any lower standard, we would of not only embarrassed ourselves but also the university, the nursing department and our sponsors. It was great to see that members of the committee who hadn't pulled their weight as much as other members, were finally making up for this and sharing the workload.

Leaders and role models

Because of the complex environments in which nurses practise and the variety of situations that shape interactions between clients, clinicians and managers, debates about what leadership styles might be appropriate often emerge. For many in the health industry there is a general acceptance that certain attributes are indicative of leaders and these include intelligence, being articulate, responsible and reliable, demonstrating social skills and projecting an image of confidence in one's skills and ability. Such attributes as these can be learned and often flow on from professional education and experiences, but any assumption that these behaviours are well-suited to all health industry situations denies the complexity of multidisciplinary teams and the different types of health work that is undertaken in a variety of contexts.

Leadership models abound throughout literature on management and leadership. For instance, the 1930s study by Lewin, Lippitt and White, focused on longitudinal studies of boys in Iowa and resulted in descriptions of authoritarian, democratic and laissez faire leadership models. Invariably, and possibly because of such well-known early work on leadership models, the types of behaviour that portray leadership are often

described as being able to establish oneself as the person in control and able to direct others or perhaps that some people are leaders while others are simply not. Stodgill (1974) observes that while the theory of born leaders has supported the idea of a ruling monarchy and the class system, it loses credibility when those who expect to lead others lack the capacity to do so and instead, dominate anyone who would question their 'natural' right to lead.

Leadership research has moved forward over the past few decades and it is interesting to note the changes that have occurred regarding the concept of 'leader' and 'follower'. For example, Feildler (1976) formulated a 'contingency model of leadership' in which the relationship between the style of leadership and the situation was assessed in terms of 'situational favourableness' determined by the relationship between leaders and followers; the tasks involved and the power or authority of the leader. Luthans (1981) outlines the development of a theoretical basis for leadership beginning with the so-called 'great man' theory of born leaders which evolved into the 'trait theory' of leadership. That is, leaders have personality traits that determine their behaviour under certain circumstances and the task is to identify those people with personalities that predispose them to be leaders. He claims that a subsequent model, the 'path-goal' model of leadership, combines leader and follower motivations rather than placing the responsibility for success or failure on the leader alone. More recently, Moore's (1996) corporate ecosystem model focuses on the need for leaders to 'deal with co-evolving coalitions in diverse economic environments' while Senge et al (1996) put forward the learning organisation as a model in which 'leadership fields' operate to influence the behaviour of all involved to strive to increase their skills and improve their work relationships. Conger and Kanungo (1998) have expressed disillusionment with earlier leadership models and have embraced a model of charismatic leadership that builds on the idea that leadership is an attribution based on followers' perceptions of their leader's behaviour. As such, followers will have reverence for, and trust in, leaders with whom they are satisfied and therefore will be motivated to work cohesively and to a high standard because they feel empowered by their leader.

As students experienced different styles and approaches to the leadership role, they developed an understanding of the characteristics and motivations that influence leaders and followers, and this insight led many of them to conclude that without followers, leaders become irrelevant. As the simulation progressed it also became clear to students that domination of others was not the same as leadership, although both could generate a 'follower-ship'. Over the course of the simulation, students discovered

serious flaws in the proposition that 'natural leaders' should automatically be followed and supported.

Throughout the journals were examples of student insights about how they might successfully locate themselves within the new learning environment while maintaining their established personal identities. Sandra, for instance, envisioned herself as a natural leader from the first week, and from her journal entry she imagined herself to be a general with raised sword, leading others into battle. It was clear that she thrived on the challenge of leadership.

Sandra Week 1

We knew our topic was to be. Too hard some said - but I said, 'challenging'. Well I thought all was lost, I really did, then Tracey came in and said the community representative had changed his mind and now the topic was something else.

'Easy!' I screamed inside but as the meeting carried on, the group made it harder and harder on themselves. 'Don't make it too hard' I said, 'let's keep it simple but make it very good.' 'No, no, no', half said, 'great' - cried the other half who seemed to be on my side but would not say anything. So on behalf of these people I took on the battle with a raised sword. In the end it was decided that we would all research into the topic for the following week; plus a meeting had been arranged during the week so we could get clear guidelines on what was required of us.

The meeting will be orderly and productive next week. Why? Because I'm in charge!

Sandra's determination to be a leader and defender of others led her into challenging situations involving other students who, in Sandra's view, tried to dominate the many students who looked to her for leadership. In describing their colleagues and even themselves, students used terms such as 'dominant' or 'loud' in relation to those who were vying for both formal and informal leadership positions in the group.

Even in the early stages of the simulation students like Tina and Ivanna, who thought of themselves as being relatively quiet people, had begun to assess the credibility of colleagues who acted as though they were natural leaders of the committees.

Tina Week 2

From just two meetings it has become clear who the dominant members are and that too much power maybe a very dangerous thing if left in the control of these individuals.

Ivanna Week 2

Everybody still pushes in and likes to be heard but we're working better as a team because we have a better idea of what we're working towards and we can aim for that. It's the louder people who make an impression on the others and its not always the best impression that they're getting.

Other students who thought of themselves as being 'quiet' were impressed by behaviours they acquainted with leadership. Many students reflected in their journals about what made a person seem like a leader. Was it that they spoke with confidence? or simply that they had loud voices that dominated discussion? During the early weeks of the simulation most students who considered the notion of 'natural leadership' found it difficult to discern between behaviours indicative of effective leadership and those of domineering personalities. As they began in the first few weeks to think about the types of behaviours leaders should display, some students who did not usually behave in domineering ways, interpreted this as an indication that they were not leadership material. As the simulation progressed however, and awareness of effective leadership behaviour increased, students became more discerning in terms of different leadership styles and their relevance to various teamwork situations.

Evaluating whether people with loud voices or domineering personalities were actually leaders or not, was something that tested all students. Many students, like Amy, did not compete for leadership roles at the beginning of semester and from her journal reflections, she seemed to link being a 'loud person' with being a leader, or conversely, as she was a 'quiet person', leadership was not for her. From her journal entries it is clear that she resented having to express her views and act in a forceful way in order to be heard. Amy, along with many other students at the beginning of the simulation, began to grapple with issues pertaining to competition as well as finding a suitable role within a group controlled by a strong leader. At this point in the subject, a male colleague seemed to provide the leadership Amy required.

Amy Week 1

What really annoys me is the way in which we are being marked on participation. I think that it is rotten to force people like myself to compete with others for marks. I'm not the opinionated, forceful type of person and don't feel comfortable being forced into the position of having to be that way, especially since today was a bit of a shambles with people talking over one another all trying to get their points. So if you're a quieter kind of person like me, who prefers to listen and only talk when there is something legitimate to say, you lose.

I was pleased with our first chairperson because he seemed to set a standard to be followed. I don't think that I would like to be chairperson, I don't think that I could keep control. Also, I just have no desire to be chairperson, I think I'd prefer to be secretary.

Men in the nursing workforce have, for decades, comprised around seven to eight percent of enrolled and registered nurses yet in student enrolments the proportion of men enrolled in the community development nursing subject at that time, was closer to

twenty percent of the student cohort (19.4%). This meant that in student groups of around fifteen to twenty people, there was likely to be at least one man and sometimes more.

A feature of Australian nursing that I have, throughout my career found fascinating, is that there is a disproportionate representation of men in leadership and management positions, especially in health services and academic organisations, with around eighty percent of these influential positions currently occupied by men. Nursing is frequently referred to in discussions as a female-dominated profession however with most leadership positions filled by men, the description may not be robust under scrutiny. Logically, for such a situation to have developed, many women must have provided considerable support to the minority group of men within nursing for them to eventually lead a profession overwhelmingly populated by women. I was therefore interested in how students perceived leadership ability in themselves and others and also to observe which students displayed a desire to take on leadership positions and how much support they received from their colleagues as they pursued leadership opportunities.

The highest profile leadership position was that of weekly chairperson, followed closely by that of weekly secretary, both of which attracted the same participation marks. In a simple examination of who held these positions during the simulation it was clear that the men were more attracted to, and more successful in being elected to the prestigious chairperson position than were the women. Interestingly, 28% of the chair positions went to the 19.4% male cohort of students, while 91.5% of secretary positions were held by the 80.6% female cohort of students. Of the 28% of men who took chairperson positions, 4% failed to fulfil the requirements of their role whereas only 1% of the women in secretary positions failed to do so. While it is not the purpose of this study to compare committee role performances of men and women, these simple calculations certainly indicate that there may be a possible correlation between the status-seeking behaviours of students in undergraduate studies in nursing and executive employment patterns across the Australian nursing workforce.

Evidence from the student journals provides some insight on student perceptions of themselves and their colleagues in relation to these leadership positions. For instance, Frank, at the beginning of the simulation, thought of himself as a natural leader and the beginning level of credibility he had within his group increased over the following weeks to a general acceptance of his ability to lead. Elected during the first meeting to take on the leadership role, Frank rose to the challenge. Later in his journal, he interpreted the

lack of competition for the position as apathy but once the committee elected him as chairperson, his critical assessment of colleagues seemed to decline. While some past experiences at managing meetings helped a little, he soon realized that his penchant for orderly meetings was not fully supported by his colleagues. Still, he remained optimistic that they would soon commit to the project as he had done.

Frank Week 1

At first I thought I was in a fairly apathetic group of students - no one wanted to be chairperson or secretary. I was nominated for chairperson which I gladly accepted. The secretary, however, had to be coaxed. I think this is because it is a very daunting task standing up in front of a group you have not worked closely with before and trying to keep them under control. Although, I have had previous experience at chairing meetings, I still found it daunting and was nervous at first. My nerves soon disappeared, however, as the group started throwing around various ideas and got really involved (No apathy here! I am glad I was wrong!).

The meeting and flow of ideas was interrupted on several occasions when people came in late. This upset me, not only because of the inconvenience but because it gave the impression that these people were not really interested or committed to this project... Overall, taking into account that for many this was their first committee meeting, things went quite well. There were a few members who talked more than others, however, I think as time goes on and people get used to these committee meetings they will start to open up and come forward with some good ideas.

As it turned out, Frank was able to maintain a strong leadership position within his group although many of his journal entries remained critical of his colleagues and their approaches to project work. Even so, he was able to maintain positive working relationships with most of the students in his group and when the simulation finally ended he believed he had learned much about leadership and expressed sadness that the group was disbanding.

Early in the semester, women in most of the groups seemed to accept men as the natural leaders. Many early volunteers for taking on leadership responsibilities were in fact the men in the groups, and apparently they achieved this with the support of female students, many of whom commented on the issue in their journals. Harriet was particularly impressed with the dominance shown by one chairperson as he exercised control over the group.

Harriet Week 2

After a week to collect our thoughts and get over the original shock, this week was much more bearable. It seemed to run much better this week. Everyone didn't seem to be talking over the top of each other.

I think this had a lot to do with the chairman for the day who is one of those people who seem to naturally take charge of a situation. He's a very

dominant person and therefore is a confident leader. Whenever the meeting began to become uncontrolled, he seemed to set the group back on their feet and bring order back to the meeting. On the other hand though, this week the group may have been better prepared for what was to happen. With a better understanding of what occurs during a formal committee meeting, the group were able to understand that order is important...

The situation within most student groups early in the simulation was chaotic because of their blatant efforts to gain profile and participation marks. For order to emerge from these rowdy meetings the chairperson needed to be able to communicate in a way that could be heard and respected. It was not long before students began to distinguish between students who were simply loud and those who asserted their views in order to progress the project agenda. Elma journalled her thoughts about a male colleague who chaired the very first committee meeting. She was impressed with his style, however she also wondered about the power he had used to limit the input of others.

Elma Week 1

The ways of a committee are all new and from our first meeting I wonder how anything is ever really solved, as everyone seems to have their own opinion on what they want and think, causing chaos on many open discussions. This leads to screaming matches with only the person with the loudest voice being heard. Looking closely, this arose due to the newness of the committee procedures. Of course with this dilemma, proceedings were not running smoothly.

One can now understand the important role of leadership, which was undertaken by the chairperson who luckily knew something of how things should run. With his assertive manner, ability to openly communicate and listen to the other members and reign control, some sort of structure was formed and proper proceedings were undertaken.

Elma's perceptions of difference between leadership assertiveness and aggressiveness were based on observing her male colleague and the interactions that occurred between loud and quiet students during the meeting. As she continued to think about the meeting he had chaired, Elma concluded that strong leaders are needed to quell rowdy meetings, but that aggressiveness was not a desirable leadership trait.

Elma Week 1

It could be seen from this first formal meeting that certain people were being the dominant members of the committee, outpacing the quieter members. This is both positive and negative, as one can look to these people as leaders with skills to communicate and start the ball rolling so to speak. Although, they also limit unfairly those who are not quite as assertive, or in fact aggressive, which is not an ideal leadership quality. It is quite intimidating and leaves the other members unwilling. I admit that I thought of myself as a quiet member at first. It could also be seen as a

disadvantage that I was clouded about the running of committees and the importance of these meetings. I am afraid that I am going to be left behind.

Among the students enrolled in the subject were several who had completed nursing qualifications through the hospital training system and were in the process of converting their professional qualifications to a Bachelor of Nursing. Craig had already had some experience as a clinical nurse and was one of the more mature members of his student group. Evidence from his journal indicates that he interpreted his election to chair the committee meeting as an expression of the group's confidence in his ability to lead them, and he was determined not to disappoint. Part of his preparation for chairing the committee was to understand the committee process. He thought that once he had the rules of formal committee procedure, he would be more confident at the prospect of leading his group into confrontation about the point-scoring system.

Craig Week 2

I was lucky enough to run into a friend in another tutorial group. She gave me a list of guidelines to use so that we can get the process right. The group before this meeting elected me chairperson and from the behaviour of the forum members I'm going to try and set a standard. The committee members have expressed that I have experience and the direction to get the job done. I want to ensure that freedom of expression through the proper process will allow the quieter members of the committee and the aggressive members to be heard...

This point scoring system fills us all with dread as some feel that aggressiveness is the key to point scoring. Unfortunately or fortunately, whatever stance you take others are intimidated by this conflict. Too much confrontation in such little time. But I have to admit, I don't mind confrontation having clarified the meeting process. After reading these roles to the group they are more accepted and there was a general sigh of relief in the group...

Having successfully controlled his rowdy committee by Week three, Craig realized that colleagues were seeking his assistance with group conflict. This may have been related to the fact that he was already an experienced nurse who offered this assistance, or, as mentioned in several journals of other students, Craig was himself a person who tended to dominate discussion and give direction as he thought necessary.

Craig Week 3

I decided that our group needed more positive reinforcement to master cohesiveness. I presented a report to the forum, tailored and directed to our group so that we all know that we are all in this together... The Committee members are coming to me having gripes about other student's aggressive behaviour. A standard of professionalism has to be introduced, otherwise a flight is going to develop and we will fail to meet our objectives. It was received well (my speech) and I felt good about saying positive things about the group. I hope that this may fix the problem. I seem to be the unofficial conflict manager. The group is enthusiastic but already they are

becoming disenchanted but the actions of these other students and their effects on the committee. I hope that by concentrating on the positives a group identity can be made.

Ros was less impressed with the leadership style of some of the men than her female colleagues. However she too, on reflection, seems to value an authoritative if somewhat domineering style, particularly when indications are that organisation and prior planning seem to bring positive results. She observed that one student seemed to have taken over the group and that he had even prevented another male student from participating in discussions. After thinking about the way he acted as leader, Ros concluded that she might be able to learn something from him about strategy.

Ros Week 2

Read over last meetings minutes and observed today's meeting, not that there seems to be much of a meeting going on. Alfred might as well run it himself. It seems that everyone has somehow relinquished authority to him. Larry had been chairperson for the last two meetings and has not seemed to get a word in edgewise. To his credit, Alfred is a very strong personality and though he could tone down a touch for meetings and give those less verbal a chance to express some thoughts, his voice of authority and maturity will benefit us as a group. Perhaps he can teach us a lot. I was watching him throughout the meeting and noticed that he had made a list of proposals prior to the gathering which he was simply putting forward. NOT A BAD IDEA. I will do that for next week.

Ros was interested in the amount of work associated with being secretary for the committee meeting and the comparable work required of the chairperson. While not fully aware of the extent to which the small proportion of male students had captured control of around one third of chairperson positions or defaulted on their responsibilities as chairperson, she had noticed how, when she was secretary for one of the early meetings, the male chairperson had failed to complete his duties. As a result she had been propelled into a public responsibility for which she did not feel prepared, and she resented the way her male colleague had shifted the work onto her without losing participation marks for being chairperson.

Ros Week 3

I realized today that it is very hard to carry out two activities at once. As secretary for today's meeting, which, thank God, had just ended it was very difficult to write down each members comments and give my own committee feed back. It was probably a good idea that I was secretary as it limited my ability to talk, and I have noticed that I tend to dominate conversation at times this is something I must get a handle on.

The following Monday:

How embarrassing, I definitely don't like giving presentations. In today's forum I had to give feed back about our groups progress. The chairperson didn't turn up which I am not impressed about, especially as he is getting

double my marks as he was chairperson, and I have had to do all the work ie typing up the minutes and giving the class presentation. How is this a fair way of marking?

For Ros the issue was more about fairness in the assessment than any gender bias regarding status, however she was not the only student to react against people in leadership positions who seemed to prevent the types of participation that would allow others to attract assessment points. The fact that so many chairperson positions were taken by men in the first few weeks of the simulation was not known to any of the students even though enthusiasm by men for the position is obvious when examined retrospectively. Overall in the first four weeks of the simulation 38% of chairperson positions were taken by the 19.4% male cohort. When examined week by week the interest by men in the chair position is very clear, for example, in Week one 36% of chairpersons were male; in Week two males accounted for 45% of chairs. Students who may not have been fully aware of the extent to which this was occurring, were able to observe the effects as they pertained to their own circumstances. Blaise, for example, realized that she had good ideas but could not express them effectively, while one of her male colleagues seemed to have no difficulty in expressing ideas that Blaise thought were irrelevant.

Blaise Week 2

The person with the loudest voice and the one that can interrupt the fastest are the people that get heard the most, and get their names written down....Alfred would have been mentioned the most during the meeting today, this would be because every time he went to say something he would start with, 'I propose', even when it was a suggestion. This was frustrating for me during the meeting as he has such a loud voice which would make everybody stop talking, and most motions that he proposed today were irrelevant and didn't focus on trying to decide a topic.

Having to deal with colleagues who were unreliable was also frustrating for Genevieve who was quite clear in her own mind as to what someone with leadership responsibilities should be doing. Unlike Ros, Genevieve was unwilling to step in and fill the breach left by Kyle's absence.

Genevieve Week 6

I attended the subcommittee only to discover that Kyle [the leader] wasn't even there because [he was tired from attending a social function] - how important! I don't think he's got what it takes to make an effective leader - there's not enough commitment which is a key principle to be a leader. The other members weren't very impressed either and there was some talk about proposing that Kyle step down. Apparently he cancelled last week's meeting as well - I don't know how he thinks the work is going to get done...

Students who behaved as if they were the natural leaders continued to be a source of disenchantment for others in their groups. Some, who did not see themselves as leaders, or as dominant members of the group, took the opportunity to observe and critique leadership qualities exhibited by their colleagues. Following several weeks of observing one particularly ambitious colleague, Angela interpreted his behaviour as an attempt to get mentioned in the minutes and earn more participation points rather than focusing on controlling disruptive members of the group.

Angela Week 7

I realize now how important it is to have a good chairperson. It is no good having a chairperson who is more devoted to obtaining extra points than to his job. I think that one person should have been chairperson every week because the meetings were all disjointed. I guess the only way this would have been possible is if points were not awarded for participation. But this could lead to further problems because I am sure nobody would be trying as hard if points were not awarded for participation.

With her interest in the dynamics of leadership, Elma reached a conclusion early that having a loud voice and being assertive was the only way to get ahead in the new system. Her attitude was typical of the students who quickly established their dominance over the group projects and the positions of leadership.

Elma Week 3

I still feel like this project is going nowhere; there are still the same people dominating the group. The meetings are still getting caught up in irrelevant motions. This has come about from the marking sheet on how points are awarded, stating that making a motion or seconding gets you points. Therefore motions are being slung everywhere and seconds are coming from all directions, just to gain points, whether the person really believed in what they were saying. It is apparent now that you have to have a loud voice to be heard and if you sit back and object quietly, bad luck; being assertive is the only way.

Many students around the middle of the semester, no longer accepted all outspoken colleagues as leaders. In fact some students, like Robert, realized that the errant behaviours of other students might actually be holding their progress back.

Robert Week 6

After endless negotiations with a fellow committee member it's become obvious that the group work is becoming harder and harder to coordinate. Even though we still have a fairly long time to organize all the events it seems as though nothing is getting done except group arguments and fights between members. I'm determined not to let this happen not only for the group but for my sake.

There seemed at that time, to be a subtle change developing in the ways students approached reflection on these matters. In particular, rather than responding on an emotional level to the persistent arguing that was occurring, students like Marjorie were

beginning to interpret that behaviour in terms of how it affected team achievement and their own personal goals.

Marjorie Week 6

Nobody can really agree on any points. People are getting angry, because they can't get their say out and when they do, they are shot down for it, or so it seems. There is one particular person in our group who has to disagree (well at least argue) with everything that is suggested. (Why can't they ever be happy?). I suppose there has to be one person like that in every group and maybe it is good sometimes because it makes us think of whether the suggestion is good or not.

Charmaine was also irritated by the aggressive way some students were pursuing their own interests at the expense of both the project and opportunities other students might have to voice their ideas. Usually a reserved person, she now called into question the validity of what these vocal students had to contribute.

Charmaine Week 7

I hate the way some people are going out of their way to earn points... I suppose that I just can't understand why people become so selfish and loud-spoken when assessment marks come into play. There are few people in our committee, who propose anything that sounds half decent, just to get a mark. They tend not to really think about what they are motioning and they also tend to argue about their motion, until it is passed. This presents many problems, especially trying to discuss more important proposals and issues.

These same people also try to second every motion put forward, and they even got the extent of seconding something, after someone else has and being recognised for it, as they have a more outspoken voice. I really hate it when that happens as they often take the marks from the less outspoken people who are struggling for marks. It is very hard to overcome this problem, as you will always have your outspoken members, however, I don't know if I am the only one to notice this problem but if I was chairperson I would try to recognise valid from invalid proposals in order to stop them wasting time and secondly, I would try to ignore these people and listen more closely to what the less outspoken members are saying.

Different styles of leadership began to form in the first few weeks and the effectiveness of these styles of committee management were cause for consideration by some students. While many were aware of the types of motivating forces affecting decisions made by those who took up leadership positions, Ken's insights on the effect of overlaying established management styles and relationships between colleagues, with the role expectations of formal committee positions, were typical of those held by most students.

Ken Week 4

Again the inability of the Chairperson who was largely reserved made the situation worse. Lack of control at moments caused further degeneration.

There was also the observation that both chairperson and secretary were members of the same subgroup that were especially at odds with the other subgroup and this was worse after the meeting. When I spoke to the chairperson I was told that not wanting to stamp her authority was a result of the chairperson not wishing to offend others.

The type of analysis undertaken by Ken in his attempts to understand why people behaved as they did, was in fact the basis of learning opportunities arising from the simulation. Analysis of leader behaviour displayed by colleagues was a common topic in student journals during the second month of the simulation and included observations on their ability to control others in the committee room, and also the way some students were naturally able to communicate in public forums with ease while others found the experience daunting. Thoughts about 'natural gifts' occurred to Peggy as she observed some colleagues who seemed to take on leadership responsibility with little difficulty. As she did, she expressed a belief that she could learn to do the same even though she may not have been given these 'natural gifts'. Peggy realized that public speaking in front of large groups was a type of communication skill that she needed to develop for her future role as a professional person.

Peggy Week 6

It is interesting in the forums to see who out of all of us has the gift of natural communication skills where they can simply talk and discuss matters with ease and those who have sheets of prepared notes to guide them. This also is a lesson in itself, to teach us the art of communicating to large groups, something we will have to get used to if we are working within the community.

But the leadership skill of being able to boldly address large groups was not something that most students felt confident in doing. Many students felt inadequate about speaking out and getting their ideas recorded, even in small group situations. Experiences with small group tutorial presentations had not really prepared students for the task of addressing the full student cohort in the forum, and many were deterred from taking on the chairperson role because of this aspect of the chair's responsibilities. None who reflected on what it might take for them to develop leadership skills at this stage were under any illusions about the need to change and become more articulate and confident. As she watched her colleagues present to the forum, Norah was annoyed at herself for her initial reluctance to take on chairperson responsibility.

Norah Week 3

Today was the first of our forum feedbacks... The chairperson did the talking while the secretary just stood there for moral support. I made a mental note not to volunteer myself to the chair. If I really had to I would,

but standing up and talking in front of such a large group of people is not on my list of favourite things. This mental note annoyed me later in the evening because I felt gutless. Although I don't think I lack confidence amongst my peers, I've never been fond of presenting things to large groups. I have only just gotten used to giving tutorial presentations to about twenty people; but I suppose this is something I have to work on. I actually feel quite jealous when others present things with such ease, and without the 'blotchy neck'.

Students in their groups needed to find ways of using their own skills to get their group to achieve a successful project. As the projects progressed, students reflected on what they observed happening in their groups and between individuals and started to consider what was needed to make their group work better. In many instances, these reflections included thinking about whether to take risks themselves that would improve their own circumstances and also help to achieve group goals. Partly because of the necessity to compete for leadership positions created by the marking system and partly because they wanted their group to work, students began to learn how to perform as positional leaders as well as find strategic ways to exert influence and to lead more subtly. Monica set out to join a group of students who had behaved in ways that conveyed an impression that they were the natural leaders, simply to wrest control from them at some future point.

Monica Week 3

Another important issue that gained my attention during today's meeting was that while I was reading the previous weeks minutes, I had realized that I was not exactly part of any subcommittee team and this became a worry to me, as my name was hardly mentioned. But when Ros brought up the idea of forming a subcommittee, to check the functioning of the meetings, I automatically volunteered to be part of that team. And the main reason as to why I put my name on the subcommittee was because I had realized that it was the same people who were trying to take control of the meetings and leaving the quieter people out of the game. So really, I am starting to get quite irritated with the type of people who think they are so great and want control over things all the time.

I suppose in any meeting you would always have those types of people who would always love to hear their voice only. Anyway for some reason, I had noticed that when I volunteered to be in control of the particular committee, I noticed from some of the members' faces, they were not so happy or impressed with the idea. To tell you the truth, I really don't know why they don't feel happy about the idea of formulating the subcommittee. I suppose I will only know, once I take up my role in the subcommittee. Overall, the meeting went Okay and it did feel good, to act as a chairperson.

The following week Monica was still annoyed by the assertive behaviour of the few she had identified as 'the leaders'. As far as she was concerned, the source of the problem

was the assessment system and therefore it needed to be altered, even a little, to allow others to achieve with less difficulty.

Monica Week 4

Today we had another meeting for the subject. Boy, is this subject starting to get quite difficult to maintain as it is becoming time consuming and also a lot of people are really starting to get very sensitive in terms of their feelings...

The thing that is really starting to bother me, especially after today's meeting, is the way in which the marking system is organized for this subject. I mean, since these meetings have started, from Day 1 most members are fighting to propose and second motions only to get the marks. But, the annoying thing is that it is the same people that keep on putting their leg in the door and thus take over the whole tutorial. Thus, the disappointment of this marking system is that it does not accurately give other members much of a chance to put their opinion in the door as the leaders just keep on taking control.

I am just thinking that in a normal community type of meeting, there would be the possibility of a person always wanting to take authority but I am sure that other members still have their chance of saying something, maybe because it's dealing more with real life situations whereas in our case, people are only interested in the gaining of marks. So really, I do think that the marking system should be altered a little, so as to allow for individual achievement. Anyway, I suppose that's life overall.

As the subject progressed, those who first took up formal leadership positions established certain expectations of those in the role and passed on certain attitudes and approaches to their responsibilities that were observed closely by their colleagues. Students were learning from each other about ways to gather enough support to be elected and also how to prepare for the position and how to perform once elected. Particular students, who thought of themselves as followers or workers rather than leaders, soon began to think about what it would take for them to be able to lead their committees.

As one of the quieter people in her committee, Clarice thought that the way forward might include pushing herself to vie for a leadership position. Her journal reflections on the extent of the challenge and benefits that may flow if change were to be implemented, were evidence of the learning process she was experiencing along with her colleagues. She believed leadership occurred through teamwork and good communication, as well as encouraging people coming up with good ideas and all of this was possible only if the chairperson controlled the group sufficiently to enable the quieter members to participate. As she observed other students in leadership positions, Clarice considered taking on the role because she thought that, with the power of the

chair, she might be able to bring some equity to the meetings and enable quieter students to share their views.

Clarice Week 3

I have started to think about being the chairperson for one of the meetings, but I am unsure as to whether I can handle the group and keep them settled. I know that when I am sitting in the group there are a lot of things that I would say to stop some of the shit that is going on. For example I would like to get everyone quiet when someone else is talking, maybe showing hands when someone wants to speak. I believe that some students at times have too much to say about nothing and other students who sit back don't get the opportunity to say what they feel. Although they are quiet members they still need to be regarded in having their views stated.

I believe that one quiet student has at times wanted to say things as I have noticed this happen a few times, but she sits back because those with a louder voice seem to take over at times. The thought of being chairperson has crossed my mind a few times, but I am still unsure about it.

As students reflected on what they were learning about leadership, some of the quieter ones started to consider the consequences of not taking risks and challenging the more outspoken students for leadership positions. From time to time students who had previously felt more comfortable following than leading, expressed in their journals, frustration at not being able to speak in ways that could be heard. There was also concern that the potential contribution to the projects of less assertive students was being overlooked because they were not able, or willing, to assert themselves during committee meetings.

Sara could see the kind of people who took up leadership roles early in the simulation and was already concerned that assertiveness did not automatically denote leadership. Her early reflections indicate a belief that less assertive people may be abdicating responsibility for their own destiny by not making the effort.

Sara Week 1

Leadership roles gain extra marks and those roles went to the assertive ones who spoke up and said 'I'll do it'. The group leadership went to a vote, with a questionable outcome, or so I heard as I was out of the room. These leadership roles may have gone to assertive people but that doesn't mean they're the best person for the job. The quiet person who doesn't like to promote self may have been excellent in that role. We'll never know. The shy, less assertive people in the group tended to sit back and let the assertive ones decide their destiny for them. Which, I guess, is the way any structure in society works.

The problem for many students was in finding a way to be heard in rowdy committee meetings where the loudest voices seemed to hold sway. The rules that students had

been given on meeting procedure suggested that managing the meeting environment to enable all to participate should be a chairperson responsibility, but with so many people who thought it was their natural right to lead, the matter was less certain.

The simulation was set up so that the opportunity for all students to be heard and to be acknowledged for their ideas and work depended on an effective chairperson who ensured that the meeting process was fair and equitable. Through observing their colleagues as they tried to guide the group towards productive outcomes, they developed skills in judgement and synthesis related to piecing together strategies and skills that might be successful when it came to their turn to be the leader. Marian was particularly interested in leadership competence and began to observe the effect of leadership on the functioning of the committee.

Marian Week 1

The first meeting! Many ideas were discussed... However, the chairperson did not maintain control. Due to this the meeting was not as organized or run as smoothly as it could have! Due to the assessment of class involvement, everyone was trying to propose new ideas and second these ideas to get marks. As the chairperson was unable to successfully control the class many ideas were being proposed at once and often the pushiest and loudest voice ONLY was heard. The softer voices were not heard and their ideas were not discussed.

The issue of whether 'quiet people' should be protected and opportunities to be heard given to them simply because they were 'quiet', arose during most of the simulations and was discussed in the forums as well as during private consultations with students seeking clarification and support on the issue. Invariably my response was to ask them why they regarded 'quiet people' as a protected species, and also, what they thought could be gained, and by whom, if 'quiet people' were encouraged to avoid learning how to assert their views in a competitive situation. The associated issue of leadership responsibility in protecting quieter colleagues who seemed to lack the skill or the will, to participate effectively, was also raised from time to time by both outspoken and quiet students. Lively debates ensued each time issues around this aspect of leadership responsibility were raised in the forums.

Whenever the matter of assessment was raised and debated in the forums, my usual approach was to present students with other options that might be used for assessment. As the semester progressed these debates developed into opportunities for articulate students to display their leadership abilities and other students to consider modelling on their behaviour. At one stage of a forum discussion about assessment,

Caroline wanted to join in, but found the pace of debate too much for her at that stage of the semester.

Caroline Week 5

Today a forum type discussion took place at the Community Health Development lecture. Students had the opportunity to put forward their view on the marking criteria for Community Development Nursing. The views were eloquently and thoughtfully expressed by those students that spoke up and were expressed well by the students who spoke up on the issue. I was one of the many students uttering one to two word syllables. I wanted to have a say but my thoughts would not form into a logical argument quickly enough. The students' views were based on the principles of fairness, individualism, access and equity.

Beth identified the cause of most problems as the assessment system, however found my approach to controlling class debate to be something she might emulate when eventually she took on the role of chairperson. From her journal entry it was clear that she was alert to examples of behaviour that might assist her to lead others when eventually she got to be chairperson.

Beth Week 5

I thought it was great how we as a student body were able to sort out our thoughts and present them to Tracey about the assessment format. I really feel that this way of marking the whole project is disadvantaging people and causing problems. It is trying to make people fight with each other. Well it may not be trying to do this, but it is accomplishing this...During the forum I could see Tracey had complete control of the lecture. I realize this is what I will have to do when I am chairperson. This is scary as I may not be able to control them. It will be an experience I am grateful for as I have never been chairperson before.

Marian decided that poor leadership skills of the people chairing and recording committee meetings were causing quieter people to be out-manoeuvred. She thought that some chairpersons did not give her a chance to speak and that this was not as it should be even though they were students. In her view, the tutor was actually the leader of the learning process, and therefore should have assisted quiet people like herself to speak and earn participation points, rather than leaving them to compete with more assertive colleagues.

Marian Week 5

The problem is that each meeting depends on the leadership skills of the chairperson to strictly control the meeting. With a good chairperson the quiet people would have a chance to speak and the loud ones would be controlled. However most people taking on this role, from what it seems, do not feel confident in doing so. Another problem with this system is not all the ideas are proposed. Often ideas were discussed in the meeting but were not proposed so not seconded, and even though their ideas may have been helpful, they were not written down.

I believe that although this may be one way of assessing the group, it is a subjective method and therefore the tutor should help the chairperson if they are having difficulty in controlling the group, so that all the members who have something to say are heard and marked accordingly.

Feelings of being unable to speak up in the committees plagued several students for much of the simulation even though they realized that by not insisting on acknowledgement of their work and ideas they were at a disadvantage because of the focus of the assessment system on being visible. In Charmaine's opinion, being outspoken equated to being selfish and as 'being selfish' did not fit with her view of herself, she decided not to participate in this way.

Charmaine Week 7

I know that I am not the most outspoken person in our committee however I often have my own views and proposals worth sharing with the class, but am unable to voice these ideas due to the outspoken people not giving me a chance. I suppose that I should be more outspoken if I really want more marks and I don't really blame these people for wanting to gain top marks, however, I am not the type of person who could be outspoken and selfish among fellow committee members.

During the first half of the semester, for students like Marian and Charmaine, the locus of authority and leadership rested with the teachers, not with students. But as the weeks progressed it became clear that students were expected to take control of their own situations and act in their own best interests. Once they realized that they could take control, some students jealously guarded their newly found autonomy. For instance, during the early weeks of the simulation, having me or another teacher present at committee meetings, even as observers, seemed to impede some students in the expression of their ideas in open discussion. While students such as Marian expected teachers to control the process and remove any inequities and injustices arising from competition, others did not want anyone outside the group to exert authority over their projects. A logical progression of such independence led most students to the belief that if it was not the role of the teacher to protect the quiet students, then perhaps it was the responsibility of the chairperson to do so.

Occasionally, students realized that not having a teacher present actually promoted positive discussions. Ivanna, for example, noticed a few weeks into the simulation, that when the teacher was not present, she felt less intimidated or embarrassed to speak.

Ivanna Week 4

Today we had an out of the ordinary formal meeting and I found that great progress has been made. We are able to hold an official meeting without the presence of Tracey and it went well... I also feel that as a group we are able to discuss things in a logical manner now without worrying too much

now about hurting anybody's feelings. I, myself, don't feel so intimidated or embarrassed to say anything in front of the group any more.

For Marian by Week six, the absence of some voices was still a concern. She continued to think of ways in which the application of rules could limit the activities of outspoken people who regarded themselves as leaders, while sponsoring those who regarded themselves as followers, or at least, less competitive compared with other students. Her ideas were presented during a forum debate and were carried, setting an agreed standard for all students to follow as a way of calming the rowdiness of committee interactions.

Marian Week 6

Although the meeting was organized, I thought the quiet people were still not being encouraged to speak. The louder voices still tended to dominate. These quiet people I believe need assertive skills to have their opinion voiced. The chairperson however should have noticed the quiet ones trying to voice their opinions and allowed them to speak. These problems may be resolved as the chairpersons gain an understanding of what is needed....

A few days later:

There is still the problem of people trying to second proposals before anyone else. This is frustrating as the loudest still wins. Maybe a way around this would be to place a limit on the amount of 'seconds' a person can make, thus allowing the quieter people to second proposals.

Within two months of the start of the simulation there was evidence that new leaders were emerging within various committees. Early leaders who had secured their dominance through assertive behaviour and loud voices, had mostly had a turn at chairing the meetings and other students were beginning to put themselves forward, not only to gain assessment points, but also to ensure that the project work was completed to a standard. Accounts of experiences of taking on leadership roles and responsibilities were the subject of many student journals as they developed awareness of how leadership responsibility had caused them and their colleagues and friends to behave differently. Paula reflected in her journal on the consequences of taking leadership roles in terms of living up to the responsibilities leadership entails. She realized as she continued to journal, that she was learning to be a leader and in Week six of the simulation, she felt quite capable of voicing her opinions.

Paula Week 6

Forum day again. Agendas were delivered and all of the other groups seem to be coming together - except ours. The subcommittee, of which I am a member, met after the forum. One of the girls declared that she was going to be the leader of this subcommittee. This girl does not seem to be willing to accept the responsibility that goes with the title. In retrospect, if put in the same situation again, I would insist on a proper ballot within the group so as to stop any arguments. If a person wants the responsibility of a group

leader then that person has to live up to it. Maybe this person feels rather insecure and this is a way of hiding that insecurity. Then again maybe she just likes the power of a leader but not the responsibility that goes with it.

I used to be one to hold back and say very little but I find that I'm becoming very vocal in my opinions and attitudes and have trodden on some toes. I think that University has given me the opportunity to be self directive without having to rely on other people's decisions concerning those goals. Today I found that I am quite capable of standing up and airing my opinions without the world crashing in around me. I do not suffer fools very well now and felt like bopping a couple of people on the nose.

The emergence of new leaders was sometimes a surprise even to the students who recognised their own, new leadership ability. Throughout the student journals it was clear that their earlier acceptance of domineering behaviour as being indicative of leadership, no longer applied. In recognising that loudness did not always bring with it sensible ideas, all students began to accept more responsibility for listening to each other. Often those who originally could not imagine themselves as leaders came to realize that with courage, they too could be leaders. For instance, Sara had begun the subject thinking that she was not one of the 'assertive ones' who could lead the others, however by week eight she could see that there were rewards for bravery in the simulation, for herself and for those she could help.

Sara Week 8

I was chairperson for this meeting, and I liked it. I was quite nervous at first and found the 'formalness' that I needed to portray was foreign and at times difficult as I am basically a laid-back no nonsense person who doesn't like any kind of fakeness or falseness. It was almost like being someone else for an hour, and that was good. I followed the committee guidelines in that I tried to the best of my ability to protect the weak. I did this by constantly looking around the room to ensure all who wanted to speak did so. Especially looking at those I know to be shy, or rather have come to know them to be shy in this setting. It takes guts to speak up in these meetings and some people just can't do it. Because of this their fate will be decided by others. I don't know how happy they are with that but it doesn't make me happy. Those who are shy must be encouraged to speak up, and that's what I tried to do.

Situations that stimulate people to begin thinking of themselves as leaders are as varied as they are themselves. For some, the stimulus may be a growing sense of self-confidence, for others it may be recognising that others are in need of assistance. In Marian's case, having observed the effects of poor chairing skills in previous meetings, and having given some consideration to the introduction of new rules to protect some students who were having difficulty with the competitive meeting environment, she was now challenged with having to put her views into action. She had been elected to chair the next committee meeting and address the forum.

Marian Week 8

Today I was chairperson. When I was elected the week before I was unsure how I would cope controlling the entire group. I was hopeful an agenda was prepared so I could follow it, which would help in providing a basis for the running of the meeting.... On the day I had mixed feelings about being chairperson. When the tutor did not turn up, I began to get a bit nervous, as no one was there to help prompt the meeting along, if need be... I think the meeting ran quite smoothly. Everyone was quiet most of the time, listening to the one person speaking. When things got too loud I successfully quietened the group down... Overall it was a challenge to run the group.

A few days later:

Speaking in front of the lecture was definitely an experience. I did not know what to expect or how I would perform when placed in the position of talking to a large group. This is something I have never done before. I knew that I only had to read out a summary of what we did on the last meeting, so I was not too nervous. Speaking, I have found from past experience, has been a poor area for me. When evaluating how well I spoke, I found that I was reasonably confident.

In order to be elected to a leadership role for the following week, that is, the chairperson or secretary positions, support was needed from other members in the group. Often, the process started with the desire to be elected followed by a certain amount of political lobbying by the candidates so that they knew ahead of time, whether they had sufficient support to win the vote. While competition using a dominating approach could secure a leadership position earlier in the simulation, at around the middle of the simulations students began to realize that credibility and integrity were also needed if leaders were to retain their positions or succeed in being elected to be chairperson or secretary. Information provided in the handbooks and during lectures outlined the types of behaviour displayed by reputable professional people during meetings and these expectations became a basis for judging meeting behaviour in terms of the value it brought to the overall project. For instance, Mavis noted the behaviour of one colleague who seemed to assume that the group would support her self-nomination as chairperson. The student referred to by Mavis, had in fact undertaken considerable political work prior to the meeting to ensure she would be elected. Of course, a little diplomacy may have caused less friction.

Mavis Week 4

The Chairman appeared to be confident and prepared. I thought it was a good idea that before the meeting began, he reminded us of correct committee meeting proceedings and to be aware of not using the suggestion-squashing reflex...Another member then seemed to be in a hurry to end the meeting, often remarking that we should move on to the next agenda item so that we could all go home, even standing up as the meeting came to an end nominating herself as chairperson for next week,

on her way out. This behaviour did not impress others, as we had all tried to show our appreciation for their contributions, and did not create a good team spirit.

The experience of being elected to a leadership role for a week provided students with insight into the personal and interpersonal pressures that need to be overcome in order to capture and then perform the roles well. As the simulation progressed and more and more students realized the pressures under which the chairperson and secretary had to operate, empathy between students with experience of these roles had the effect within some groups, of exerting a moderating influence on committee behaviour.

The role of secretary was perceived by students to be less noteworthy than that of chairperson and it was not until Eliza experienced the role that she fully appreciated the importance of working closely with the chairperson to manage the meeting.

Eliza Week 6

Being the secretary of a committee meeting was quite a challenge. Yesterday I was in the limelight. It was more difficult than I expected. Previously I was under the impression that the secretary was purely responsible for the administration of the meeting. However, as I discovered yesterday, the secretary also assists and sometimes acts as a facilitator for the functioning of the meeting. If the chairperson does not have control of the group then you are destined for hours of typing or should I say interpreting the minutes. Fortunately yesterday meeting went smoothly with no dramas unlike in previous weeks. Maybe it was on the account that our tutor was absent. Being the secretary, has had an influence on my behaviour toward the chairperson and other secretaries as I now realize that it is definitely not an easy role to fulfil.

Integrity in leadership was occasionally debated by students as a forum topic, usually after several weeks of the simulation when students began to question the behaviours they observed in colleagues with leadership roles. While these debates canvassed a range of issues related to honesty and fair dealing, students eventually arrived at an understanding of integrity that included being brave enough to do what is right in the eyes of fair-minded people, even though doing so could be uncomfortable and disadvantageous in a competitive environment.

Having the responsibility of being the chairperson and then living up to that responsibility was not easy for Emily as she confronted questions of integrity and honesty when planning what to say when her turn came to report to the forum on the progress of her group. Her committee had been having interpersonal problems that had inhibited the sharing of ideas and accepting constructive criticism. She believed that as a leader, her integrity required her to say something to the forum about the problems being experienced by her group.

Emily Week 6

As I was chairperson, today at the forum I had to give a report on the work of our group. I was unsure of whether to gloss over the truth or just say it as I see it. When walking to university I thought of what I might say and was hoping that I would be able to smooth things over by a universal message not to let emotions get in the way and to act professionally and maturely. Rather naively, I was hoping to make everyone realize the vital importance of sharing ideas freely, to take constructive criticism with thanks and try to change for the better. Well, I stood before the crowd with noble notions but was unable to get many out of my mouth. It was terrifying standing before them all, thinking of the negative effects my words could have. However I think I mumbled something, I'm not sure how relevant or appropriate. I have been told by other members that I did well. However several others questioned my airing our dirty laundry. I am glad that I said something rather than lie, or omit the truth. Anyway there is the possibility it may help us or another group.

Sheryl was wrestling with a dilemma related to her assessment of the value of a colleague's contribution. She was considering whether she would be a more appropriate person to lead the subcommittee than the present leader who seemed to be domineering and unwilling to work with the team.

Sheryl Week 7

One group member is dominating the others at the external meetings and indeed our own subcommittee meetings. Dominance by this one particular group member is such that she appears to be of the mind that agenda items are a waste of time and that she'll follow her own. This was part of my concern when she nominated herself as leader. However, everyone deserves a go at trying and unfortunately the time has come as far as I am concerned to allow someone else the chance to be leader. But it is debatable whether or not I am any better qualified than anyone else because basically our group is full of talent, excluding the present mismanagement of agendas. I think the problem is, there is too great a freedom with roles. Yet no one else is bothered, so I'll leave it for now, and see Tracey about what options there are for our group...

During consultation with me I encouraged her to consider what was involved in taking on a leadership role, and what level of team support would be required for any leader to succeed and for the team to reach its goal. A few days later, Sheryl considered the contribution that she and other team members needed to make if their subcommittee was to produce work essential to completion of the project on time.

Sheryl Week 7

I feel I have been too harsh on one of our subcommittee leaders. She is also in another subcommittee and has worked hard. I have been wrong in my initial assessment of the breakdown of group activity and our situation. The responsibility for accountability of our group lies with all our members, not just the leader. I have apologised to her and suggested that we all work at making the group function more efficiently. My error was in my diary piling the lack of cohesiveness on the leader, when in actual fact the whole

group make up commitment, and our organisation is inappropriate. I should be supporting and reshaping our committee with its members, not watching its downfall. Lack of role and occupying activity I think can take a small proportion of the blame. In future, I will be more cautious and considerate to our group. I still think however a change needs to be made (will still consider).

Processes involved in learning to be a leader can include critical reflection on interactions between people, and then taking some action that will advance one's own agenda or view. Monica had taken earlier steps to join a group of students who had behaved assertively at the start of the simulation, and she was now able to test some of her ideas about assertiveness, dominance and authority. She also noticed that she had changed from being someone of whom people took advantage, to someone prepared to demand respect from her peers.

Monica Week 7

I'm starting to notice that while I am working with Ros, she tries to act very much in authority, as if she is the only one that has any great ideas! I mean, while I was telling her a few of my ideas in relation to how we should present it, she would say, 'No, we'll do that instead!' I think that I am a pretty reasonable person to work with and really, I do try my best to act cooperative when dealing with other people. I mean, she's a really nice person but I suppose her personality is just like that. Anyway, when she did it two more times I put my foot down a little by changing the tone of my voice and saying something like 'Look Ros, I want to do it this way because .'. I noticed that when I changed my attitude from being nice and cooperative to a little stubborn type, she automatically started listening to my views.

I sometimes feel that maybe people try to take advantage of me just because, who knows! But I do know now if I feel that I am not liked or respected in general areas of life I will put my foot down very tactfully so that the other person knows that I hate being taken advantage of. Listening to myself writing this, I do not apply this only in today's situation, but also in general terms within the community.

More and more students were learning to be leaders as the simulation progressed and the difference in the ways students related to each other during committee meetings was noticeable. Any 'leader-follower' status that had developed among students during the previous two years was now being challenged. In every student committee, 'followers' were more prepared to question 'leaders' about their ideas, their motives and their work, while 'leaders' were less prepared to protect 'followers' and excuse their low productivity.

Tina in Week eight commented on both the benefits and disadvantages of suddenly having more people in the committees prepared to assert their views.

Tina Week 8

The great thing now is that the quieter members are now speaking up and voicing their opinions and actually disagreeing. This has not only thrown a spanner into the works but has created the problem of them disagreeing now about things they had already agreed upon before when they said nothing!

Leah also reflected on the changes that she had noticed in herself. Not only was she more articulate about her concerns, she was also keen to see that all the students in her committee worked as hard as she did.

Leah Week 10

I am beginning to feel that this project will be a complete disaster if people do not begin to take it seriously. I am not surprised at how seriously I have regarded this project. I have always been the type of person who takes educational pursuits very seriously and this project is no exception. That is why I am becoming so irritated with people who are not taking this project seriously. However, before this project began I would not have spoken up about my concerns whereas now, after becoming more used to speaking about issues and after becoming more familiar with those in my committee, I will not hesitate to speak about my concerns.

Around Week eight, the communication and collaboration dynamics of the group were changing, and so also were emotional and intellectual factors that underpinned those dynamics. Elma had earlier concluded that success in committees was linked to having a loud voice and an assertive nature, but several weeks later she was aware that emotional aspects of the groups, especially pertaining to friendships, were interfering less than before with the building of professional interactions among team members.

Elma Week 8

Things are starting to pull together resulting in everyone's hopes getting higher. The structure of the meetings is finally pulling together as everyone is willingly participating as the final goal is in view. As friendships are left at the door, which almost every one has accepted, new working professional friendships have been made, which provides a base for enhanced productivity.

From the student journals there is evidence that by the last few weeks of the simulation, most found they were enjoying their leadership experiences and were keen to participate in activities that enhanced their learning in this regard. By that stage of the student projects most of the decisions had been made leaving very few actual leadership opportunities, but a lot of work to be completed. For those like Mairi who had yet to be successful in being elected to chair a meeting, watching colleagues who apparently 'wasted' leadership opportunities was frustrating.

Mairi Week 9

I was really embarrassed! The chairperson took her role at the forum as a joke! She was far too laid back and casual! Fair enough, an element of

humour can exist, but a certain level of seriousness must be obtained! She gave the impression that she didn't care. Her presentation wasn't prepared and it went all over the place. I really would have loved to have been chair. I think I could do an effective job! I really despise it when someone possesses something you desire and they couldn't be bothered with it! FRUSTRATING!

Even though Mairi had not had a leadership role, she was a keen observer of colleagues in those roles. She was interested to observe the responses of some of her colleagues when opportunities arose for taking on extra responsibility, and therefore gain greater profile and visibility. As someone who was enjoying the discovery of leadership ability in herself, she could not understand why anyone would relinquish these opportunities.

Mairi Week 10

The past 3 or 4 committee meetings Charmaine and Maureen have been nominated several times to either chair the meeting or be the secretary, but every time they declined! I can't understand why they refuse to take up this challenge! Fair enough they may be shy and feel intimidated in front of a large group BUT this is only a subject conducted at University. How are they ever going to cope in the real world if taking on these positions are too challenging? One will never know how well they perform if you're never put to the test. Of the two jobs, if they were to take upon any it was the secretary perhaps because they believed it wasn't as great a level of competence required. WRONG! It's just as challenging but in different aspects. It is not an easy job at all! I haven't yet chaired a meeting, but there are several meetings still to go!

Other students noticed that Charmaine declined the committee leadership role nomination and Angela understood how difficult it was for her. After all, as she said in her journal, at the beginning of the simulation she too had been scared to take up such opportunities.

Angela Week 10

I also noticed that Charmaine declined from being secretary again. She is always hesitant to be a part of the management team. I would jump at the chance if I could do it again. It is funny to think how when we first started I said I would never do it. It reflects that I am not as scared any more. The meetings have helped me to overcome my fear. Perhaps this is why Charmaine declines all the time. She does seem very quiet and doesn't say much. It sounds just like I was!

Charmaine did not comment in her journal on why she did not accept nomination but she did express a view on how unjust the system was and how unfairly people were elected to be committee leaders, causing problems for herself and others. Her quiet resistance to the simulation continued to the end, but while she did not get any first-hand experience of these leadership roles, she was very interested in how her colleagues performed.

Charmaine Week 7

The second issue that arose from today's committee meeting that I was unhappy about was how we elected the next week's chairperson and secretary. This issue comes back to the problem of the first issue, as some people are electing themselves every week, just to get more marks. These people, if they got their own way, would be chairperson and secretary every week.

The responsibilities associated with providing leadership to others were widely appreciated by students who had attempted to perform well in these positions. Travis discovered that it felt good to be a leader in whom people had confidence. By the final weeks of the simulation, he had decided that his role as a competent leader was more about managing the work of others than his own technical productivity.

Travis Week 11

One final positive outcome to the day on a personal level was the boost in my confidence and ego. As I entered the room I was approached by various Subcommittee members needing to talk to me to confirm, approve, finalise and support certain issues. I felt good because it demonstrated that people have faith and confidence in my decisions and in my opinions.

Throughout the Subcommittee meetings it feels that my contribution is minimal because of the fact that I delegate all the work, but my involvement is with respect to planning and directing the subcommittee. This I feel is an enormous amount of work, because if the leader does not direct properly there is little progress or enthusiasm within the group. The fact that I was approached to approve submissions, was very encouraging because it not only proved we were heading in the right direction, but once again it showed that my subcommittee has confidence in my judgement and respects my decisions.

While many students might have agreed that coordination of other people's efforts is itself work, some interpreted such approaches less generously, especially when it was their work that was being presented by the leader of the group. Norah had been too shy to bid for a leadership role but a few weeks into the simulation she was regretting not having put in a bid for one of the leadership positions.

Norah Week 6

I queried the work performed by the subcommittee today. We realized that being the head of a subcommittee entitles the person to four extra points and felt that all our head did was regurgitate our information. I wish I'd volunteered for the position.

Frank and his group were thrown into a situation requiring courage, commitment and leadership when one member of the team faltered in their contribution. The choice that had to be made called upon the group to move beyond personal friendships and to prioritise the group project. Even though he knew they had done what was necessary, Frank still felt bad about it.

Frank Week 11

Well, finally something worth writing about! Our committee was today confronted with a major dilemma. One of our group members had failed to turn up to this, our final dress rehearsal. A choice had to be made as to what should be done to this person. It was suggested that if they did not turn up to this rehearsal they should be taken out of the presentation completely.

I felt really bad because this person was one of my friends, but like Tracey said, you have to leave your friendships at the door - therefore, I voted in favour of the suggestion because I did not want the efforts of the whole group to be thwarted by the irresponsible behaviour of one member - the group always comes first.

I had been approached by Frank's group in the hope that I would make a decision that would absolve them of the primary responsibility for the decisions they confronted. I remained with them while they discussed options and eventually, they arrived at a decision. Briefly, the students took the tough decision that if their colleague did not demonstrate that she had done some work and was prepared to contribute, she would be excluded from both the presentation and the group mark attached to the presentation. This decision was communicated by telephone to the student and shortly thereafter, she arrived to join the group. Lillian, who was also part of that group, commented on her responses to the situation.

Lillian Week 12

We had a practice today. Everyone was to show the rest of the committee what they had to present. Early in the day we all flew into a panic. One of the group was not there. She didn't turn up. I was so angry with her...Tracey made us confront the situation by saying that we needed to make a decision. Eventually the decision was made. If she didn't turn up today she was going to be excluded. If she turned up but wasn't prepared, she would be excluded but if she was prepared we would continue with her. This was a hard decision to agree to. Although it was fair, she would fail if we did it. I really did not want to be responsible for the decision that led to someone's failure. She turned up but her speech needed a lot of work... I am glad, however that we did not have to exclude her completely.

As students worked towards completing their journals, many took a moment to reflect back over the experiences that had been part of this simulation, and how their thoughts had changed about leaders and leadership responsibilities. They also thought about where they might fit into the scheme of things now that they were almost finished their degree. Several students commented upon how they had commenced the learning experienced as quiet people who were ready to be led by others, and yet now they had learned to be leaders. Mairi typifies their experiences in her entry about the project presentation day.

Mairi Week 13

I do possess leadership skills but they still need brushing up on. Perhaps I'm too nice. I don't want to put people out, create waves, so I take it on and suffer the consequences be it lack of sleep, other work suffered and handed in late etc. Anyway enough of the negative aspects. I'm so nervous and excited. Everything is finally (I hope and pray) going to pull through!

The morning was so good everyone was working together doing their bit to contribute to the day just as it was planned. It was so good...I feel I did my job well as subcommittee leader. Looking about the room it was worth it, it looked Great! Tracey was really impressed and helped us out. This was really great having her support. It provided me with reassurance that all was well and looked impressive...

The target group loved it. The presentations went really well. The community organisation representatives loved it! I couldn't believe the comments we received. They thought we conducted ourselves so professionally producing an excellent and effective presentation. HOW ENCOURAGING. What a success! To know that all those painful and demanding weeks was worth it. Our Health Promotion Day went off with a BANG.

I was so exhausted after the day. Cleaning up was fun. It was a time for all committee members to bond, express our thoughts and feelings about the activity. The past few weeks have been difficult and we've been on each others' backs. BUT we remembered we're all in this together, as friends. SO TRUE! AND THAT'S HOW IT ENDED!

Students who launched themselves with gusto into the simulation at the beginning also noticed changes in the way they interpreted group work and leadership responsibility. For instance, Beth who had taken an early interest in issues around group leadership, found that the experience had been helpful in clarifying in her own mind what it was that people expected of her, because she seemed to have leadership qualities and could forcefully articulate her opinions. In her view, the main issue around leadership had been credibility.

Beth Week 14

This project was extremely helpful to me. It gave me an understanding of what goes into a committee and what one can get out, and what better way to understand something than to carry it out.

As this topic is drawing to a close, I've been thinking about a few things and have decided that over the last nine weeks I have found myself in an advisory position. People have often come to me for advice which has not been related to the project. When I was unable to give advice, I seemed to be useful as a brick wall off which people bounced their ideas. I found that often people aren't looking for advice but instead someone to listen to them. Sometimes I was given information and expected to act upon this. I guess this expectation came because I seemed to be one of the more outspoken people. I don't believe I spoke unnecessarily. I have been brought up to 'think before you say', so most of the time I do. I do realize

that in the main committee meetings I would speak my mind, I normally spoke in place and about issues I felt had my concern.

Fanny who had earlier been very critical of a colleague who had allocated a lot of work to herself in order to gain assessment marks and then complained about her workload, also reflected on what leadership might be about. In her view, the issue of leadership was not being self-serving but rather, working with others 'behind the scenes'.

Fanny Week 14

One thing that proved to be very interesting was that the members of the committee that tended to take over during committee meetings tended to recede into the background during the presentation. This may be that their leadership qualities may be better behind the scenes, and not in the limelight.

By the end of the simulation, Ivanna no longer believed she needed protection by stronger people in the group. She was ready now to pursue her own goals and would not easily be fooled by others. As pleased as she was with the outcome of the simulation, she was happy that it was over.

Ivanna Week 14

This course has changed dramatically my attitudes about the people in this group. I now realize if you want something go and get it, don't wait for it to come to you. As well as this don't take anybody at face value because there's a lot more to see behind the mask. But I am glad that we did this and I'm also very glad that it's finished.

Estelle appreciated the rewards of leadership and had come to certain conclusions about what leaders need to do in order to be effective in the role of leader, which she liked.

Estelle Week 14

I can understand how people get addicted to leadership. I hope I didn't upset anybody on the day when I used my whistle or told them they only had 1 minute to go, or that they make the target group sit down before they were allowed to move on. I realize now why people want to be the leader and how you should go about it. You should never be abrupt; or rude; you should never tell anyone what to do; you should ask them; and you should always listen to what people have to say.

I believe we all worked so well together this day, and we all had a great time. We were pleased with the information we gave the community and we hope we got the level of presentation pitched appropriately. All in all we all had a wonderful experience.

Leadership credibility

Credible leaders are able to move a group of people towards the achievement of a defined goal, or if it has not been defined, they are able to engage the group in goal

setting. For members of the group to accept and work with a leader, that person needs to understand and demonstrate their leadership capability and commitment to the role and to the group. Reflections about competence in the performance of committee leadership roles prompted many students who were interested in how leadership roles should be performed, to consider in terms of leadership credibility, the merits of what occurred in the meetings. Irene, for example, recognised early in semester that some of the people who spoke up in meetings were making statements that lacked merit.

Irene Week 1

I strongly believe that the system of gaining points for proposing motions and seconding them, does no good when trying to conduct a committee meeting appropriately. I believe that, especially seconding a motion should come after thought and consideration of the proposed motion, and not to shout out 'I'll second that', to gain precious points, and a mention in the notes. Committee meetings are held to get a group of people together and discuss a main focus, with individuals speaking their thoughts and views. Individuals should not be penalised or gain for being quiet or outspoken. Encouraging people to speak out should be done other ways. An outspoken person may only dribble shit.

It did not take long for students who had been previously 'quiet' in groups, to begin asserting their views in the committee meetings. Sometimes, as in the case of Irene quoted above, these seldom-heard views were less than tolerant of ideas and behaviours put forward by students accustomed to being outspoken. Both groups of students were surprised at the effect that assessments of leader credibility were having on the established order of leaders and followers among the students.

One such effect was apparent with some of the quieter students expressing their irritation at the way a few colleagues dominated the committee meetings. During the early weeks of the simulation, their discontent was seldom displayed during the meetings but many discussed their views later when they felt they were among friends. Winifred had really tried to accentuate the positive with regard to the contribution made by 'know-it-all' students but a few days later she was less forgiving, even of those who did not speak up. She had discovered she was now more willing to debate issues during the meetings rather than afterwards.

Winifred Week 2

I'm really getting fed up with the know-it-all's in this group. I'm also annoyed hearing people agree to proposals in the meetings, and then whinge about the outcomes to their friends when the meeting is over. If they have any problems they should speak up in the meeting... I'm much more confident today, willing to stand up and argue with people if I didn't agree with them.

Leading a group of highly competitive students, even for a week, was difficult and often the meetings disintegrated into chaos leaving the chairperson and secretary dismayed at the lack of cohesion and feeling that their credibility had been undermined. Rowdy meetings and overtly competitive behaviour dominated these early meetings while others adopted an observer role, trying to grasp what was happening. Even so, some of the less outspoken students, like Monica, realized that if anyone intended to provide credible leadership, they would have to prepare well ahead of the meetings.

Monica Week 2

This morning we had another meeting. In the meeting, we basically just discussed the presentation and proposals were being made and seconded. Thinking back to the meeting this morning, everyone was so busy making proposals, seconding them and yet a topic was not even chosen. I mean, the director did suggest the topic... and it would be a catchy topic, but a topic was not yet decided upon and finalised. So really, how come the group is making constant proposals when really, there is no topic been chosen? I suppose they are only doing all the proposing and seconding for the marks. Anyway, I find myself observing the group during the meetings, participated in the agreeing of various proposals but I did not get to propose anything. I think I will need to get used to the committee meetings quickly, otherwise I will be left behind, I suppose. At the end of the meeting today, I was nominated Chairperson for the next week meeting, I better get myself prepared.

Week four seemed to be a time when many students found they could detect motives, even irritating ones, underlying people's actions, as well they could make comparisons between what they were experiencing and available information on similar situations. For example, realizing that some students were single-minded about getting participation points explained much of the rowdiness, and this, combined with an understanding of different personalities in the group, enabled student like Beth to estimate the challenge of leading the group to productive action. As Beth discovered, understanding why people behaved as they did was one thing, being elected to lead them meant it was a time for her to call upon considerable courage and daring.

Beth Week 4

I don't like the competitiveness of the group. I don't feel it would be the same in a committee meeting outside of this subject (as people don't get points for seconding the proposal). I found people are jumping in and seconding things without seriously thinking. I suspect they just want their name down in the minutes.

There are some definite people who are loud and others who are quiet. I have always thought of a committee meeting as being a group of people working as a group for the one benefit - perhaps my impression has been wrong. The committee meetings I have been involved with previously have been very different. Maybe it was because it was with adults who were not fighting for points, to me their meeting seemed more relaxed.

I have been nominated to chair the next meeting. I accepted. Now I'm a bit scared. I just hope I can control these 'mark hungry mob of people'. I don't know everyone's names so this may cause a bit of a problem. We'll see how it goes.

Credible leadership throughout most of the groups settled the students into a more constructive pattern of interaction and this allowed them to think about the decisions that had been made in the heat of the moment of the first few weeks. Some students, like Tina, reflected on how foolish they had been in the previous few weeks by pushing silly ideas forward 'in the thrill of the moment'. She realized that she would have to become more involved but was pleased that the group was learning to work together more productively.

Tina Week 4

There were more motions put forward this week and they were done so thoughtfully and with and less haste which proved that we all had learned something from the week before. Perhaps those of us who had made too many motions last week in the thrill of the moment reflected back and decided we had made fools of ourselves!!!, and wouldn't do that this week! I feel that I have to become more involved in the actual proposing of motions as at the moment I'm participating in discussion but that is all.

From time to time, in the various student cohorts that experienced this simulation, events occurred within committees, that demonstrated the need for credible leaders. Often, students were prompted by such experiences to comment and reflect on how they and their colleagues had performed within that situation. In one committee which had been having problems adapting to the accountability requirements of the process, the chairperson, Beth, decided that credible leadership required that she, as chairperson, should apply some quality control to the performance of committee members.

Beth Week 5

I was chair person last week and because I worked with the secretary over the week I had the minutes beforehand, which enabled me to sit down and read them through fully. Consequently I found some errors or points to be questioned. Not many others seemed to bring up questions on previous minutes, was this because I had more time to read over them? It will be interesting to see this week if I am able to find business from the minutes. I suspect that my mind will be on other things and will not have time to read over minutes as carefully as I did the week before. We will just have to see.

I find because the meetings are full of debate and continual motions I need to concentrate the whole time, so as not to miss anything. This results in myself being exhausted at the end of the hour. I find myself continually needing time afterwards to organize my thoughts.

Around mid-semester some students also noticed that their colleagues sometimes altered the way they had been behaving and were moved to reflect on their own

performance in the groups. Wanda even considered her own behaviour in terms of credibility.

Wanda Week 6

I think some people are slowly realizing the problems of the meetings. I have noticed that some members who normally have good ideas and input are hardly talking at all at the meetings. I can't help it, I will suggest ideas, but I will also object to some ideas, nicely and for a reason which I will always give.

While he regarded himself as one of the 'quieter' students, nonetheless Jack was aware of the political ramifications of not having a credible voice within the committees. He was uncomfortable at the potential for some students, among whom he counted himself, to be deemed 'failures' by colleagues who had established themselves as 'leaders'.

Jack Week 5

Unlike the previous meetings, several proposals have been deemed 'failures' when brought forward. It seems to me now that some committee members are recognising what are relevant and achievable targets...I, along with several other Committee colleagues, have some concerns that the work carried out by our subcommittee is not being recognised nor utilised to its ultimate potential...As for the other meetings we have had, there is a definite hierarchy of contributors to discussion. This week, however, it seems to be becoming more concrete in its structure. Could it then be possible for the interests of the quieter members (myself included) are to be ignored, or considered irrelevant, to those of the 'leaders'?

Mid semester was a time when the credibility of student who had been very outspoken in the beginning of the semester was called into question as the ramifications of earlier decisions about the project were being realised. The situation had changed considerably from one where marks could be gained by being audacious in meetings to one where productivity was being measured and evaluated. At this stage of the simulation, participation in and completion of actual project work attracted assessment marks leaving those students who had avoided subcommittee work, to worry about how they would fare now that most of the decisions had been made and debating skills less required. Some groups discovered that the presentation decisions that had been taken in the first two weeks when the more outspoken students held sway meant, in some cases, that the ideas that had been by the committee were unsustainable.

Some students requested more work and lobbied for access to work being done by other subcommittees. In most groups work sharing was achieved by a small restructure of the subcommittees but in other groups there was some reluctance by students to

allow into their working groups, colleagues who had been more domineering earlier in semester and whose credibility had suffered as a consequence.

Angela's irritation with students who had been loud and domineering prompted a small entry about why there was still so much confusion to be processed at the end of the semester, for the presentation to be a success. Gone is the despondency and feelings of inadequacy that featured in her earlier journal entries.

Angela Week 12

I was thinking about the main committee meetings today and the formalities of them. People proposed a lot of stupid things in the first few weeks. They also didn't think before they proposed an idea because in later meetings someone else would propose the same thing or try and propose an idea that is totally against what has been passed before. I feel people did this just to gain marks. They just said anything that sounded good at the time and did not think about the consequences.

My approach, when such matters were raised, was to leave it to the students to decide and if necessary, renegotiate details with colleagues and even the community organisations . I restricted my involvement to encouraging those who sought my advice, to follow due processes and decide as a group what they wanted and then to let me know the outcome.

Issues around credibility and the responsible performance of leaders also caused some of the 'quieter' members of one committee to comment in their journals on the performance of a fellow student who appeared to have little trouble being outspoken and domineering. Patience and tolerance were in short supply for any behaviours that did not meet role expectations or which threatened the success of the group project. Beth, who was one of the many quiet, but assertive, students who had already shown considerable skill in meeting management, was interested to observe Travis's efforts to chair the meeting. She noticed that he did not control the rowdy students, nor did she think he applied his authority well.

Beth Week 7

During the meeting there was conflict between individuals who had different views and conflicts between subcommittee groups, and about their role. Travis was the chairperson...He was not able to always control the chatter on the floor, which was annoying, because I was not always able to hear what was being said. I normally sit in view of the chairperson, today I obviously must not have been, 'cause for quite a while I had my hand up and was not recognised. Next week I resolve to sit myself where I can see and hear what is going on... Tracey mentioned we have three weeks or three more meetings. I think that stressed everyone out a bit. But perhaps we need that so we can get the work done and work as a team getting on

with each other, not like best buddies, but just enabling us to be able to get the work done, that is, on a professional basis.

His performance in the role of chairperson was commented upon by several students who had certain expectations of him and his ability to chair the meeting. What Travis thought were his attempts to be involved in discussion and debate, was interpreted by Chani as lack of skill and therefore a lack of credible leadership.

Chani Week 7

Chairperson today was Travis - his performance surprised me. I thought he would do an excellent job - personally I thought he stunk!! He kept stepping down and having his two cents worth and lost control over the meeting. I felt the problem was that we didn't stick to the agenda and kept talking about other issues. People were talking in their own little groups and Travis wouldn't tell them to shut up. If he had kept his mind on being chairperson and stopped being involved in every argument that was proposed things would have been a lot easier. Meetings like this one tie me up in knots for the rest of the afternoon. The only good thing about today was [reviewing presentation materials]- it provided some light relief from a stressful meeting.

Angela had no hesitation in holding committee members responsible for their own behaviours. She was angry and frustrated with the outcome of the same meeting and held strong views that the problems during the meeting had been caused by committee members rather than the chairperson.

Angela Week 7

There are certain members of the group that are annoying me because they cause so much trouble and conflict in the group. It would be all right if they were doing it to get things done but they are not. It is obvious that they do it just to annoy people because they dislike being ordered around by other people. Beth is always making sure that everything is done correctly and quickly and is very outspoken. The troublesome trio show a lot of resentment towards her. They are always arguing with her and rolling their eyes when she speaks. I wish they'd stop causing trouble and learn to work together.

As far as Travis was concerned he was trying to overcome his anxiety about the disruption to the meeting arising from some committee members bent on disrupting proceedings. The experience was not a source of satisfaction for Travis and he expressed his disappointment that some of the other students seemed uncommitted to the project and did not respect his authority as chairperson.

Travis Week 7

One major problem which I encountered today [as chairperson] was that of committee members disrupting the proceedings of the general meeting due to passing time. It was at this point where my anxiety became obvious. I stopped the meeting and stated that I was aware that time was getting on and that they all had a desire to leave, but these issues needed to be

discussed and if they did not have enough patience to tolerate a few more minutes, I would seriously be questioning their commitment. It was unfair to those who are committed to the activity for them to be rushing the proceedings, for the sake of their impatience. I noted that their disrespect for those who were talking was not appreciated and that the less disruption they cause the quicker we could close the meeting.

We finally carried on and ended the meeting. Although we achieved a lot of progress, I could not help but be upset at some members of the group. We are putting 100% into this thing and just because they're not interested in a particular issue they make the existing environment tense and promote a difficult and incoherent environment.

Students, who where quietly determined that their group project would be successful, were often disappointed by poor performances by their chairpersons. Invariably they took an analytical approach to what had occurred in the meetings and tried to find ways of learning from the experience. Mairi noticed on once such occasion, that her insights as to the team processes she thought needed to occur in the committee, had developed.

Mairi Week 8

What occurred in the meeting is a fine example that one must not enter into a position to spite others, or to work against some members. It should be done out of group interest and desire. One must listen to what is going on around themselves before judging. That is the role of chairperson to effectively guide the committee. This did not occur. AND, once again it proves my previous statements about the need to work together as a committee to achieve success, an illustration to me that I am developing.

Mairi was equally critical of her own leadership skills and how this related to establishing credibility as a leader. She found presenting in the forum very stressful and reflected on her own lack of confidence in public speaking. She did not believe that she had performed to expectations and was feeling that she had let her committee down in some way through her lack-lustre presentation.

Mairi Week 9

I suppose my display of lack of confidence in myself through indecision from time to time may not prove positive in establishing credibility. HOWEVER, I must admit this 'lack of confidence' is gradually emerging less and less in the meetings. To effectively lead a group one must be confident. The group should not have any cause to loose faith or confidence in your leadership. A poorly led group decreases its chances of success.

Week ten was a time when some of the earlier elections of leaders within groups was able to be reflected upon and conclusions drawn about the wisdom of some appointments. Throughout the various groups that experienced the simulation there were several instances of subcommittee leaders, whose credibility had been called into

question, being overthrown politically by others who were determined to take leadership and, of course, the assessment marks associated with leadership positions.

Judith Week 10

We had to reappoint a leader for our sub-committee, based firstly on advice that the leader should have leadership qualities, be able to organize the activities of the group, be able to diffuse conflict, communicate progress to main committee, take on the added responsibilities and duties. Secondly, the group decided our original leader was unable to fulfil this role. This was accepted by the individual concerned with no further conflict.

Our original choice was not based on any logical criteria. Everyone wanted the extra two marks so we placed names in a hat. I think it was very important that we listened to the advice given and took some logical and rational action after reflecting that we had not really considered the extra role that the chosen leader would take. We were able to reflect critically on a decision we had made as a group and decide that it really was an inappropriate decision and that changes had to be made.

There is a possibility that we did not allow the original chosen leader to show their true potential. After demonstrating only once their leadership abilities we made what changes we really thought were necessary. There is absolutely no point in having a leader who cannot lead. Intuition tells me that we have made the right decision, We will see how everything works out, in the coming weeks.

Throughout the semester, dysfunctional interactions of some groups had been disrupting almost every meeting. Moira reflected on her own behaviour over time and considered ways she could provide more effective and credible leadership within her team. As secretary for a mid semester meeting, she was determined that the group would start working collaboratively. So, drawing upon a great deal of courage, she approached her chairperson, Luella, and helped her to prepare to set out the rules of play at the commencement of the meeting that they to manage the following day.

Moira Week 8

One aspect I have noticed is how the group has changed from positive to absolutely negative, personal and uncohesive. I see this as a large breakdown in our group processes. We are not utilising our learnt resources to work effectively as a team and nursing professionals. ...Well my hoping and crossing my fingers won't achieve anything. So I've done something about it.

I've collaborated with the Chairperson for tomorrow's meeting. We both are concerned with the group and we are going to make some changes. I suggested to Luella that we be assertive and have an extraordinary meeting to explain the group's current situation so changes are made and we begin working as a team...Therefore I'm being action-orientated to help change our group processes to positive. Another way of achieving this is through group evaluation...by evaluating the committee's performance weekly, changes shall occur and encourage the group with positive evaluation results.

Well, as for me, I feel I've learned and grown a lot over the past few weeks. I've turned my frustration into action and done something about it. I feel confident and am personally 'soaring like an eagle!'

Following the meeting:

Well, everything has changed. The group has changed and we are heading in the right direction, that is toward our goals to form a Health Promotion Program as a team. We all actually used our group processes effectively to get some work done. Our Chairperson for today was great. It was great seeing her be a positive person for the group instead of negative. She has great leadership skills and the way she conducted the meeting was very professional. Obviously my pestering her was a positive effect. All the work that was put into this meeting was worth it. The evaluation went well and mostly everyone was concerned about the group, so I wasn't the only one worried.

I was so overwhelmed at the end of the meeting when everything had worked out. I suppose it was a feeling of achievement and a definite sign of relief that the group was actually trying to amalgamate as a team finally!! For all those that contributed to the change, they all must have felt pleased. Well, forward we can only go!!

Annie was at the meeting and was impressed by Luella's courage and assertiveness and was somewhat relieved that the issue had been confronted so efficiently.

Annie Week 8

The first thing discussed by our chairperson today was the ineffective functioning of our team. I was glad this came up and I feel it made a real difference to the meeting. Also, the ... team handed around an evaluation that they formulated on which we could comment on how well or poorly we felt the team was functioning. We are going to continue doing this each week which is good as it will keep us thinking about it. Hopefully they will become more positive over the next few weeks.

Time was running out by Week nine and most students became less likely to tolerate ineffective leadership and bad behaviour by committee members. Many of the attacks on credibility that occurred around this stage of the simulation, related to confronting problems with poor leadership and decisions, by discussing them as part of the committee meeting. Just as Moira had raised open discussion of problems in her group, Judith's group also did this in week nine, with positive results.

Judith Week 9

The best thing about today's meeting was bringing out in the open the problems the group is having and then having a discussion about how we can solve these problems. Everyone agreed on the suggestions that arose from the questionnaire. It's simply a matter of putting them into action. Everyone needs to be responsible for what they do as individuals and then maybe we will have less conflict and work more steadily towards our goal. The chairperson was able to control the group well at today's meeting. A fair bit of business was organized.

Some of the confrontations that occurred were associated with dealing with colleagues whose work and general participation had been judged to be inadequate. I had been available for many students consultations on the issue of ensuring transparency in acknowledgement of work and finding ways to motivate disinterested students to produce their work on time and to a standard.

Emily, the chairperson of a particular committee meeting had met with me to discuss concerns about the poor performance of some of the members. As chairperson, she believed her credibility rested on being able to bring the group's performance up to standard. Valerie, one of the students about whom Emily had expressed concerns, had been particularly upset at the way she and her subcommittee were being dismissed by the main committee members. No doubt their worries were increased when, during that meeting, she and her subcommittee members were confronted about the standard of their contributions and the role of their subcommittee. From the quote below, it is clear that Valerie found the experience distressing even though she agreed that the standard of her performance had been less than credible.

Like so many other students who faced peer review of their work, Valerie had also approached me for support and guidance. She had been struggling to understand the context of the simulation and in previous meetings with me had required many explanations of what different roles existed and the expectations associated with each of them. Throughout the first few weeks of meetings Valerie had attempted to have the subcommittee role clarified by the committee, even though this was a task that each subcommittee had been required to do themselves. Because it was now week five of semester, the group was making very slow progress overall because of the internal conflict that was occurring.

Valerie Week 5

Today was not a very good meeting for me. The chairperson had a go at me from the start as I was secretary last week. She said that there was a problem with the minutes because they were put up on the board too late, however this was not correct. Then she wanted to read the minutes out and I understand that it is an important task, but if you can not get to the board on time then may be it's just bad luck for that person. Everyone openly admitted at the meeting that they did not read the minutes, and will all the assignments that were due this weeks it was self explanatory. What a great way to start off the meeting, I guess that I was just headed for one of those days. The chairperson then criticized the wording of the minutes said it was not good enough and then also said the same for the content. However, I feel that with everyone talking at the same time last week, a miracle that something was written down and typed up. I just felt that the way it was said was not that appropriate even if it was justified...

It was said that our subgroup was not doing its job and that we should go back and define our roles once more. Well this sounds like constructive criticism on paper, but the way the complaint was made was totally unprofessional. The tone in that woman's voice absolutely humiliated me and my fellow subgroup members. It was the way it was all said, especially in front of all the other team members hurt me a lot, because it made me feel like a total idiot and that we were lazy and incompetent. I also felt that she could have approached us first on the matter before bringing it to the meeting to embarrass us in front of everyone. If she was so concerned about this then she should have come to us to discuss the matter one month ago when we asked if anyone objected to our roles in the very second meeting that we had...

I just can not believe how stressed I felt after this meeting... I just hate feeling that I have let everybody down when I know that I have done my best. It's a pity that there has not been a lecture on what to do when things go wrong like these circumstances. Maybe I should see Tracey McDonald on how we should handle the situation.

With more and more students taking their responsibilities as group leaders seriously, the number of incidents of students requiring their colleagues to meet expectations increased. The position and authority of the chairperson was often the focal point for this quality control activity and as students became more familiar with the rules of committee meetings they also seemed to accept the authority of the chairperson, even when the people in those positions were their friends. It was as if being the chairperson somehow carried with it a greater burden of responsibility that superseded prior relationships. Whenever the chairperson demonstrated credible leadership through their position, other committee members were more likely to take direction from the chair.

In the following example, Angela describes how one student was challenged about her work and the way it was to be presented to meet the standards determined by the chairperson. She, and many of the other students present, began to reflect on what was possible within the parameters of the role.

Angela Week 5

I could feel the tension mounting in the room and feelings of hate erupt between friends. It felt as though everyone in the room were my enemies and I had to fight to win my own way. The chairperson was excellent this week... She kept the group in control. If you saw the group and how much they were arguing, trying to all speak at once, then I think that you would agree she did a fine job. She was so precise and she used her power to advantage. There was one incident where she displayed this. Joy the leader of [a subcommittee] presented to the group her team's activities for the previous week. Joy then submitted a written copy of what was said. She had not read out word for word what was documented. The chairperson insisted that Joy reread the report before submitting it because it would be misleading the rest of the committee as the report may be accepted and

passed by the board when they might not really agree. The chairperson persisted and I could feel the tension that was being conveyed between them.

Looking back upon this incident I feel the chairperson was right to demand such a thing. This action reflected that Beth was the chairperson and was therefore in control, total control, and that she should not be crossed. This ensured that the running of the meeting ran smoothly. No one stepped out of line and they only spoke when recognised by the chair. I didn't contribute to the meeting much today. I seconded that we should vote and decide on our topic. Too many people were stalling and not willing to make a decision. The only solution to this was to vote on it otherwise it would go on for weeks. Affirmative action had to be taken...

Whenever similar events occurred, and the legitimate authority of the chairperson was asserted, students expressed their interest in the way in which the authority was used as well as the various responses made by students. In the quote below, Maxine describes the mood of the meeting as the chairperson applied her authority to a situation. She was impressed that during the confrontation, other committee members relied on the rules of procedure to enable the matter to be resolved.

Maxine Week 12

A 'hot' meeting today, after a chairperson asked a committee member to back up her seconding of a proposal, and then asking the committee member to explain further as the chairperson didn't believe her rationale was sufficient for supporting a proposal. The chairperson stood firm in her decision, but the committee member became offensive. It was interesting in that this had not happened before in a meeting, it was the first incidence of the chairperson questioning a seconded motion. It was also interesting to see the reaction of the committee as a whole. They were very quiet, but just let the situation resolve itself. It was very professionally carried out by the chairperson, it was interesting to see a member of the group, particularly one in charge, to question a seconding motion, rather than just let it be passed.

Responsibility and accountability

Professional accountability is generally achieved through adherence to professional codes of ethics and behaviours which clearly state what can be reasonably expected by the general public in their dealings with professionals. One core attribute of effective leaders is that they are accountable for the authority they use and this in essence means that the person takes responsibility for the outcomes of their actions and those of their team. Within the health industry it is generally accepted that people in leadership positions and those who are leaders in their own right because of special expertise, are accountable in many ways to different people and organisations .

Accountability to employers or those in supervisory positions, involves being responsible for one's own work as well as the work of the team that one leads. In situations where someone is self-employed, for example in private professional practice, accountability will be to the clients, the law and to the standards of one's profession. Being accountable for oneself involves being able to judge fairly the work one does and where necessary to make adjustments that will maintain productivity standards. Team accountability means that the leader communicates essential information, both pleasant and uncomfortable, to team members and works with them to meet standards and resolve problems. There may be times when these accountabilities create dilemmas that need to be resolved if the person is to act responsibly. My hopes that students would experience such moments during the simulation were realised. Along with my hope that they would find acceptable ways to resolve these dilemmas.

The simulation was designed to mimic a bureaucratic situation in which each student was accountable for their contribution to the project and responsible for maintaining team relationships and systems so that the work could be achieved on time and at an acceptable standard. Similar pressures occur in the health services environment where the work of nurses and other health professionals is fraught with interpersonal stress which, if not handled effectively, can lead to the development of workplace cultures that can make working with others more arduous than it needs to be.

Many of the students commented in their journals about issues around their own and others' accountability and responsibility for the projects. In some instances students experienced, as a result of reflection, what could be called 'turning points' in terms of perceptions of the responsibility and accountability owed by them and their colleagues. Through their observations of how colleagues handled responsibility and how they themselves responded to the pressures and burdens of leadership accountability, most of the students gradually altered their perceptions about what was occurring. Most of the so-called 'quieter' students developed ways to communicate more effectively, while students who had relied heavily on being aggressive to get them through, eventually gained insight in terms of being more courteous, accountable and taking responsibility for their part of the project.

Being a passive participant did not prevent some students from being given responsibility and in the quote below, Dean describes the dilemma he faced when he was 'roped into' accepting a leadership position even though he believed he was

unsuitable. When Dean thought about it later, he had some regrets about accepting nomination to be leader of a subcommittee but realized that he could not continue to be a passive participant in this subject. For Dean this was a critical moment that prompted him to reconsider his usual pattern of student behaviour.

Dean Week 4

The first committee meeting. It was so official, I couldn't just yell out and say what I wanted to. Sometimes I felt a bit nervous and just sat quiet... We broke up into subcommittees, I was sort of roped into, but I accepted the task of leader of the subcommittee. I also joined another subcommittee...

Looking back I should have not accepted to be leader of the subcommittee as I really am not very creative, but I decided to give it a go. I feel that I am not going to be able to just sit back and listen, I am going to make an effort and get involved. I'm going to be assertive, and get my name in the minutes. Really I should not have been so quiet in the first meeting, but I feel my topic suggestion is a good one and I will pursue it.

Some students were ambivalent about wanting to be successful leaders and having to take on the responsibility for leadership and the accountability that goes with those roles. Dean soon found himself as the leader of one subcommittee and also a member of another one. This was a common experience for most students because of their enthusiasm to be involved in the subcommittees and also to earn participation points. The advantage of the arrangement was in being able to experience a range of different approaches to meeting and working group management styles and, it was hoped, formulate a view on what made working groups effective.

It was not long before the responsibilities Dean had taken on became burdensome and he wondered whether or not he was able to meet all of his responsibilities. In reflecting on his own performance as leader, he realized that his efforts as leader were not as effective as that of his colleagues and, he concluded that more effort was required of him if he was to meet his responsibilities and organize the work of his subcommittee.

Dean Week 5

I was surprised that even the subcommittee meetings were very official with minutes being taken. I wonder if this is necessary? It just seems like more work... Thinking about it, organisation is needed when dealing with a group of people, I don't want to let people down. Really I should have made all my subcommittee aware of the meeting and wrote down what we discussed. Comparing my subcommittee meeting with the other subcommittee meeting was a joke. The other subcommittee meeting was much more thorough and organized. I need to pull my finger out as leader and get organized.

A few days later:

I felt I did very little in comparison to the other subcommittees, I didn't even put our findings on paper. I'll make an effort next week now we know the topic. I feel organising yourself is sometimes hard enough, let alone

organising others. This is something that I must face and overcome if I am going to be a successful leader.

As members of his subcommittee became increasingly vocal about his absenteeism and poor leadership, Dean realized that his position was becoming untenable even though he thought the complaints of some members of his group, were 'over-reactions'. He offered his resignation and stepped down as leader, however, it is clear in the quote below, that he later regretted his decision.

Dean Week 6

I got some quite negative feedback from members of my committee because I wasn't there, but one member took over, as she wanted to be leader since day one. I took their criticism and 'bitching' behind my back and thought to myself if they are going to be like that then they can be leader. Basically I haven't been very responsible and it would be better for the whole committee if I stood down as leader...This day really frustrated me, I know I did the wrong thing but I feel as though they are overreacting.

A few days later:

I stood down as leader of the subcommittee, and the girl that wanted to be leader all along was made leader. Looking back I shouldn't have given in to all the pressure to stand down. I should have taken the criticism and put a heap of effort in to undo my mistakes.

As students developed an appreciation of the processes involved in the simulation, they began to apply performance standards to colleagues who had undertaken leadership roles in the subcommittees, and to hold them accountable. By Week six, the consequences of volunteering earlier to take on certain work roles were being felt by those who undertook them as well as those who expected them to perform, for the good of the team, in those roles. Chani was a member of Dean's team and for her the revolt and overthrow of him as leader, was a matter of holding him accountable.

Chani Week 6

I attended the subcommittee only to discover that Dean (the leader) wasn't even there because (he was tired from attending a social function) - how important! I don't think he's got what it takes to make an effective leader - there's not enough commitment which is a key principle to be a leader. The other members weren't very impressed either and there was some talk about proposing that Dean step down. Apparently he cancelled last week's meeting as well - I don't know how he thinks the work is going to get done.

The assessment of group participation based on the minutes of meetings set up a system whereby all members of the committee were able to see what was being done and who was doing the work. Several weeks into the simulation, students regularly counted up their own appearances in the minutes and that of their colleagues. With such a transparent system of accountability, students interested in criticizing

colleagues on the basis of their work, needed first to consider their own contributions as displayed in the minutes.

For example, Thelma, who was also part of Dean's team, had been covertly working against him and lobbying for a change of leadership. In the quote below she assessed her situation and in doing so she realized she was not achieving the expectations she had of herself and, compared with the output of her colleagues, was not doing enough work. She realized that her lack of productivity was open for all to see and was politically aware of a potential challenger to her coming role as chairperson, just as she had earlier challenged Dean's leadership.

Thelma Week 6

I was warned by a member of group four about another girl who is constantly whingeing and I may need to watch out as chairman. I am now scared and unsure of what to expect at the meeting. This is compounded by the fact that my understanding of our committee is not so solid after all. Referring to my proposal on regarding queries go first through our subcommittee, I now understand what an utterly stupid proposal it was and highly unrealistic. I do feel very unhappy that I didn't recognise this earlier. I will hopefully be more careful so as to avoid this situation in the future.

Our submeeting today and I was unable to attend. I did send my apologies. I wish I could have gone because I don't like having things decided upon when the whole group isn't there. I like to put my 2 cents worth in, especially after finding out a meeting time had been arranged and accepted by the committee. It's hard to grasp, that even if the whole committee's not there, decisions are still made.

Later that week:

I am extremely unimpressed with the level of commitment I have so far displayed to the subject. I have now missed both my subcommittee meetings for the week. This is disappointing to me in that it tells the subcommittees that I am unreliable and I don't like being cursed with this title, even if I am the one naming myself as this. It's extremely difficult for me to feel involved in the committees if I miss them. It's irrespective of whether or not my absence was unavoidable, I still was absent and I am disappointed and angry about the level of commitment this reflects. I hope the committee don't think I'm shirking responsibilities.

The next day:

People still aren't turning up... Resentful, cross and fed up... I didn't enjoy today because I couldn't contribute any of my work to the group because I didn't have any. Everybody in the group who attended today had worked hard gathering their information. Everybody's contributions were valuable and I felt out of place not having one. I don't like being in this position and I hope my other assignments are easier. I came away from our meeting feeling down in the mouth about not having anything to contribute. Everyone was so excited with their findings and I had none! ... I hope tomorrow leads me to some information, because I am slowly finding it harder to fill my diary with positive achievements and contributions of group process.

Having been ousted from the subcommittee leadership position, Dean was now a member of the team that he once led. Despite the embarrassment he felt, he and his colleagues worked to establish a more professional work relationship and got on with the tasks they needed to complete. Looking back though, Dean realized that he need not have succumbed to the pressure to give up his position.

Dean Week 7

I am now just a member of this subcommittee. I thought that this may be difficult as most people were upset and disappointed in me. But I'm glad I was professional and so were the others, and we just discussed and worked together on things. Working with people on a professional basis is important in all aspects of life, and looking back there was really no need for me to stand down. I could have just gone on and not worried about what happened. But generally everyone is happy now and we are working together well as a team. I feel I am working well within the committees and am working well in a team.

From the perspective of the person who defeated Dean, Thelma, reflecting in week ten on the outcome of her efforts to remove him from his leadership role, regretted what she had done. She now believed she should have been more responsible and accountable in her approach to the situation.

Thelma Week 10

Today's effort was wonderful. However, my concern is still accountability for 'leadership' and agenda items. I think once again when I look back I was instrumental in instigating a leadership change, to allow for accountability. However, what I didn't bargain for was a greater loss of accountability with leadership than we previously had. I feel let down and disappointed. My initial observations and assessments were accurate but implementation of change showed no forethought for accountability and direction. This is upsetting.

Accountability to oneself requires a certain level of self-assessment and in the simulation students were encouraged to monitor their own reactions to the many experiences they encountered. They were asked to reflect on why they responded as they did and consider whether these responses were helping them to achieve their personal agendas or hindering them. Many of these experiences were personal, for example, Emily admitted that she tended to be sensitive to gender dominance issues, but she also discovered that she had an interesting response to certain styles of leadership.

Emily Week 2

At the committee meeting today I had difficulty accepting the chairman's style in organising the meeting. I personally found him to be patronising and self-opinionated which caused me to be more argumentative than usual. I am aware, mind you, that I am very sensitive if I have an inkling that a male is adopting a superior attitude simply because of his sex and not his

accomplishments. However, hearing the chairman dismiss a member's reasonable suggestion with an attitude of contempt caused me to go into a slow boil. At least I have recognised now that this kind of leadership causes me to react by making his job a little more difficult than is necessary, or at least to ask him WHY he is doing something...

Emily continued to explore her reactions to the men in her committee and also the behaviours that they used to control others. She wondered whether she should confront people who were acting aggressively or whether caution was a wiser option. In the description below she shares how her insight into the differences between rude and assertive behaviour led her to act in a way that successfully reduced the disruptive behaviour of her colleague.

Emily Week 3

One of the male members of our group reacted negatively to the chairperson. After he was nearly at the door, it was pointed out to him that this wasn't necessary and the chairperson asked him to return to his seat as he was lingering. He grunted something then said in an aggressive tone that he didn't need to be bossed around by her. Thinking about it now, we as a group should have silenced him, or requested an apology, or noted his pettiness and childishness in the minutes. It's hard to know what to do when it happens and I suppose in cases like this it may be better to learn the way of caution rather than hasty decisions or words.

I found myself getting frustrated today at the same person due to their holding the meeting up with their incompetence...This male member (please don't think I'm sexist, I just don't want to identify him by name) today interrupted another member who was discussing the method of presentation, to say that we needed to decide on the topics! He sulked after I stated (assertively) that it had been clarified and decided on weeks before and more than adequate information was given to the group about it. For a change, his friends did not support him either.

Emily's reflections about gender and dominance, and how she could learn to interact productively with male, authority figures, led her to believe that she was learning to perform well and, because of this, she felt motivated about the subject.

Emily Week 4

I have received two phone calls and a letter from an organisation wishing to contribute to our presentation. To be honest I was doubtful about getting any and I just sent letters thinking we had nothing to lose! It was difficult negotiating over the phone about what they were to give us. I had no idea of how much money to ask for, morning tea, or even if I had the authority to decide on behalf of the group. So I said I would call him back after discussing it with the group. Accepting and thanking him for the offer. This has given me a much more positive outlook about this subject. It has increased my motivation to present a really good project.

It was in Week six of the simulation that Emily uncovered a further piece of the puzzle concerning her problems with authority figures. In a brief entry in her journal, she

identified her own inclination to dominate those whom she assumed were less efficient than herself.

Emily Week 6

I have realized that unless the other person I am working with is efficient, I tend to dominate. I am very organized generally and like things done as soon as possible. In the future I will need to be aware of this so as to not offend someone else.

Reflections on why one behaves in certain ways can be considered part of personal accountability because it enables a person to reach a deeper understanding of what is happening and what must be done to overcome reluctance to take responsibility. Therese found that journaling her thoughts about herself and the subject requirements stimulated her to make connections of which she had been unaware.

Therese Week 3

By the looks of things this subject is going to take up lots of extra time outside the allocated hours... Some of the proposals I voted against, I feel as though I should have voted for. I take too long to decide, I procrastinate more. Maybe I take notice too late. Then again, better late than never. Especially if there will be a huge difference in the outcome. Even though I am not so vocal in this subject, I find that it certainly influences my life. By writing this journal and reflecting upon my lecture material, I am beginning to see the connection. WOW!, I am actually putting my brain into working mode, after so long!

Her personal challenge occurred the following week when she presented to the combined student group in the weekly forum. In reflecting on why she was so nervous she realized that even studying with these people for years had not prevented the response she had felt. In a moment of insight, Therese wondered if she should take a different perspective on life itself - and then took it no further in her journal as the very idea had made her mind go blank. But still, she had questioned herself about something she had previously taken for granted.

Therese Week 4

Today I got up in front of our group. I swear I made a fool of myself. I was so nervous, it was awful. As soon as I walked down those steps, my heart began to race and my hands sweat. I think sometimes, why should I feel like this in such instances. I have been associated with these people for over just two years. Maybe I should look at life from a different perspective - my mind has gone blank - forgotten what I was going to write.

While she did not mention it in her journal until the very last entry, Therese had obviously been thinking about her attitudes and the way she approached life. By the end of the simulation she knew that she had not made a fool of herself, and realized that deep reflection on her own behaviour had allowed her to learn and grow.

Therese Week 14

When I was doing evaluation forms with the target group they recognised this presentation as being worthwhile. One person in particular pointed out how it is a good opportunity for us to learn as well. I can certainly relate to that. Without this subject I would not have personally questioned myself and my abilities, perhaps not as deeply anyway.

Personal accountability can also entail decisions to change general approaches one may take to work. For instance, Mairi was an active contributor in committees and forums and as she gathered more and more experience she was able to reflect on the way she had always approached her work and other activities. She was beginning to realise, by week five, that rising to a challenge may be exciting, but actually being responsible and accountable once she had gained a role, required determination.

Mairi Week 5

!! I gagged the heated debate!! To be honest I didn't know what I had done until the onlooking lecturer was surprised and then supportive of my move. Despite the fact that I didn't know what the hell I had done (technically). I felt so good once I had known! Did I feel competent! Like, despite the lack of knowledge 'I still know' how to re-establish an effective meeting...

Nominated, accepted and voted in as next week's secretary! Looking forward to it - rather demanding. I like roles like this as there exists an element of pressure and this is all I've known. Role doesn't appear simple. However, I accepted this nomination as a challenge. I have a reputation for my heart being in something but never really getting anywhere - I've never really completed things - if I do it is usually that day OR last minute. This will be interesting. I aim to show myself and those who know me that it is possible, that I can do something correctly and on time!

Even though the simulation afforded opportunities for students to take steps to minimise negative consequences of their own decisions, ultimately they were responsible for their own behaviour. Angela knew that the committee meetings were compulsory and that a formal apology was needed if she was unable to attend. Failure to submit a formal apology would mean the removal of one mark from her overall tally. But the consequences of being absent went much further for Angela who found out that during the meeting she had missed, subcommittee membership and work roles had been decided, and she had not been allocated to any of them. After a few days of anxiety, Angela found the courage to take the initiative and the necessary steps to get herself back into the group.

Angela Week 5

I had a meeting with Tracey today about my absence from the main committee meeting. I informed her that I did not write an official written apology because I could not foresee I was going to be ill. I also told her that I had rung my friend and informed her that I would not be attending the meeting. Tracey said that I would lose a mark if it was not officially

documented or if my friend had not informed the committee. Well I didn't need extra worries, so I hope my friend advised the group. Great! Just what I want to do is to start with minus points. I need all the help I can get and anyway why should I lose marks for not being able to see in advance that I was going to be ill.

Today I also found that there are subcommittees within each main committee group. Now I was even more concerned because I was told that all the groups were full. If I am not able to be in a group I will fall even further behind because I will not understand what is happening in the subcommittees and I will not get very good marks. I do not want to wait until Thursday to find out if I can be part of a group I want to get involved now! Well I took it upon myself to place a notice on the third year communications board. I addressed the note to all my groups members requesting them to contact me if they need an extra member in their group or if I can join them. I am awaiting a reply.

Her efforts to compensate for her earlier lack of responsibility amazed her as she had not previously done anything like this. She was stunned at the action she took to ensure she remained competitive within the group.

Angela Week 5

Still awaiting a reply. I couldn't wait around for people to contact me it is my responsibility so I took affirmative action. I approached the leader of one of the subcommittees. I asked him and the other members if I could be a part of the committee. He was a bit hesitant at first. Why? I don't know. Maybe he thought it wasn't the proper procedure and that it was up to the main committee. I think he was afraid to make the authoritative decision but he shouldn't have been because he is the leader. The leader should be the one in control. Anyway he finally agreed with the help of a little persuasion. I am now a member of that team, now all I have to do is make it official at the main committee meeting.

Looking back on my approach and the degree of persuasion I used stunned me. I am not usually a person to approach people I don't know. I guess I was like this because I felt left out and I wanted to be involved. If I didn't act now I would lose more marks and I don't want anything to get in my way and jeopardise my chance of passing everything in the last session of my final year of the degree. Now that I am a member of the subcommittee I had no hesitation in attending the meeting scheduled for today.

Some weeks into the simulation, committee groups were beginning to understand their different roles and opportunities for visibility associated with performing their work well and articulating their views on matters of concern. Marsha, who had tried to act responsibly, was confronted by other students when she reported on the individual work she had done. In fact she was rendered speechless at the ferocity shown by her colleagues in defending areas of work activity for which they felt responsible. Marsha reflected on how her priorities had changed since the beginning of her university studies.

Marsha Week 5

I plodded along to our committee meeting today and was unexpectedly surprised that it was a bit more organized than the last one. I can't say that we have achieved much more, but we didn't seem to be yelling over the top of one another.

I have also come to the realization that it is every person for themselves in this project. Tracey was right when she said you leave all friendships outside the committee meeting. I've been bitched at in this project. (I went and did some research on my own and later a few members of another subcommittee turned up) I showed them what I found. But to my amazement I was not thanked but rudely told that I was 'not part of their team' and virtually to mind my own business. I was so shocked and disappointed; speechless as a matter of fact.

This assignment has become a bitch fight. I remember when I was just out of high school and I suppose in first year Uni, I didn't mind a good bitch. Now I just haven't got time for it. I believe that this is a team effort and bitching is not going to get us anywhere. I guess I've matured a lot since 1st year.

As students became more familiar with what was expected of them in terms of leadership responsibility as well as personal responsibility in committees, standards of work performed also became part of the expectations associated with role performance. As the chairpersons and secretaries began to demonstrate greater proficiency in running the meetings and organising the project work, committee members began to have confidence that a successful project was achievable.

Wanda Week 6

After this meeting I must admit that I felt a lot more confident about this whole project. I thought that this week's chairperson was the best so far, as she laid down the rules straight away, she did her best to keep us in order, and she had also researched on the running of a committee meeting, so she knew what she was talking about. This has been the most formal meeting we have had so far.

I think everyone agrees that communication is one of the most difficult aspects with such a large group, so group leaders set out the role of their group on paper to refer to. Some group leaders didn't have their reports typed up to hand in, I think this is slack especially when others make sure they have done theirs. I believe the leader has a responsibility to do this as they are representing the active members of their team. I also don't understand how some members can be in more than 2 subcommittee teams and fully participate in these teams. Maybe some people just did it for the points...

Even students who performed reasonably well in managing the meetings were judged by their colleagues in terms of using authority to meet their responsibilities for controlling the group. It seemed students such as Angela who, in the quote below, outlined her view that the responsibility for controlling students rested with the chairperson rather than with individual students who often challenged the authority of

the chair, or those who regarded themselves as having no power to influence the committee and therefore remained quiet.

Angela Week 6

The running of this meeting went fairly well. Although it was not run as efficiently as last week's meeting because the chairperson was unable to control the group. The chairperson went through the agenda with precision and she knew exactly what was happening next. She did well, but did not use her full authority. After a motion had been seconded the discussion still continued on the topic... This aroused anger amongst some people within the committee but it was still seconded. The committee continued discussion concerning this matter. I realize that two people can oppose a motion but this was just ridiculous. It was a pointless discussion and it was not within my power to stop it.

Ironically, members of some groups also expected their colleagues to act responsibly and to be accountable to the group for their project work. Accountability to the group meant that the members might sometimes require firm direction and those in leadership positions understood that meeting such a responsibility could be difficult. The quote illustrates how Moira approached her responsibilities. Armed with her previous theory on group psychology and a rule book on committee procedures, she was determined to take control of her disruptive group and hold them to account. While she had not been a quiet member of the group, Moira had not found many colleagues willing to follow her lead, until now.

Moira Week 6

Well, today I Chaired the committee and I took control by making some rules before we began discussion. Everyone was silent. The meeting slowly began to get some things done, however it was very hard when I had to ignore a lot of the destructive members in the committee. I found it hard to keep my usual hot temper under control, however I should be proud of myself I did!! I ignored them and got on with the meeting and I was prepared for anything. (Armed with a book on running committees with rules).

Those members of the group that were organized contributed greatly to the meeting, however many were not and our group cohesion still isn't there totally, if not at all. By now I expected people to begin seeing what has to be done and doing it yet they are not. It seems to be going the other way. Instead of the group coming together and working as a team we seem to be fragmenting. I hope my Chairing may have instilled something to get all of them working and working as a team. I took a task-oriented leader approach as we need to have a lot achieved in a short time. It seemed to work with some.

After the committee meeting I had a subcommittee meeting, at first it seemed strange, they were all actually listening to me, it was almost as if my credibility had increased and they were all suddenly interested in what I had to say!! I think for these members it finally come to realization that the task ahead was important and needed to be achieved. Anyone who could

talk about what had to be done confidently, they would listen to. Chairing the committee was a great experience as it wasn't really until then my psychology on group processes really was reinforced as I saw how group processes can work both negatively and positively. Our group's had been negative.

Controlling the flow of discussion and debate in meetings where not all members understand the requirements or the expectations of conduct can be difficult. Despite the difficulty, students expected more from those chairing meetings, possibly because those leaders were being rewarded with extra participation marks or maybe because poor role performance was impeding the progress of the committee. Even allowing for inexperience, Luella was not impressed by the chairperson this week.

Luella Week 5

I'm not happy with the chairperson from today - had hardly any control over meeting, ignored people who put their hand up and seemed more concerned with her own ideas. Was not a successful or productive meeting - proposals were being made - valid ones relevant to themes etc, seconded, open for discussion, but by the time people started talking, the original proposal got lost, subject changed and a new proposal on a totally different topic made. Things were being lost and people kept jumping in without hands going up etc. I'm not the only person quite peeved about the whole thing. If major companies had meetings like that they'd go bankrupt, we're functioning more like parliament ie. virtually ineffective rather than people trying to get something done. But, ours can all be put down to inexperience of course!

Many of the students who took on public roles, found the experience to be personally very challenging. Luella had observed the performances of others and had also prepared herself for the challenge of bringing a particularly disruptive group to order by exerting her authority as chairperson. And in the quote below, she believed that she accomplished what she had set out to do.

Luella Week 8

Well, I was chairperson today and boy was I nervous, so much in fact I broke out in a sweat and sat on the toilet all morning! I adopted the group approach, not isolating myself from the rest of the group. Every time I criticized or suggested something to the group, I used 'we' instead of 'I' or 'you'. I also didn't want to get too heavy, because this turns the group against you, they would become hostile. No one likes getting lectured and criticized, least of all myself.

At the beginning of the meeting I told (politely) the team how badly we were going, not working as a team, taking things too personally, etc. This must have worked because the meeting went like clockwork, people respected each other's speaking time and we're open to suggestions. Also, if someone proposed a motion, and the seconder just butted in with the support, I said, 'No, this person over here spoke about this before and has more reason to second the motion than you.' This was fair and prevented

irrational and spontaneous seconding. The meeting accomplished a great deal, we're finally organized and almost ready to present

In some groups, internal evaluative systems were set up to bring accountability to individual behaviour as well as group interactions. Ken had been asked to monitor the group's performance and to provide feedback on group management of the project and their adherence to the formal committee procedures. In his journal, Ken explored the elements of power, responsibility and accountability associated with his role, and he also realized the political aspects of what he was doing. For one particular moment, Ken realized the importance of what he was doing for the group and this made the possible backlash from colleagues worth it.

Ken Week 5

The group is functioning a lot better and a more cohesive group is emerging. It seems that we appear more at ease with each other. These outcomes I feel are a result of the objectives of the monitoring and I am personally grateful for my part of the contribution. I enjoy this aspect of 'go between' or 'diffuser'. Acting behind the scene so to speak give vision of the whole especially with the knowledge I have about individuals on various issues. I think one can become more objective and impartial when in a distant mode of operation. It can be abused but I do not think this position of trust was compromised. I felt privileged as part of the subgroup.

From this moment I feel that I have to be viewed as being an important member of the group. I find if support of any kind was given to any member it was important that it was done with discussion and sound argument. I don't know really if this is an issue with the group but nevertheless it is the path I will take. Heavens, I feel, I hope I don't come over as having delusions of grandeur! No I don't think so, I truly believe in the objective I have and that is to cultivate differences, efficiency and the well being of the group. There's nothing to be gained in thinking that one member is more important than the other. Our success will only be measured by how well we each contribute in our own way, whatever that might be to ensure success. If as part of the subgroup we feel that an issue needs addressing it must be done. I am prepared to be to the target of disdain as long as the goals are achieved.

Well into the semester, some committees were still trying to resolve interpersonal conflicts that were interfering with the smooth running of committees. In one group with particular problems of this type, I encouraged the student who was to chair the week eight meeting, to discuss with me her strategies for resolving the internal conflicts in which she herself had been an enthusiastic participant. The group, at this stage, was in danger of not being ready to present their project to the community and as this realization dawned upon her, Luella rose to the occasion and worked out ways that she could provide responsible leadership during her time as chairperson and for the

remaining weeks of semester. The change in Luella's demeanour was noticed by others in her group.

Fanny Week 8

Well, today went a lot smoother than I thought it would Luella was chairperson, and did a remarkable job. Due to her personality traits expressed in committee meetings in the past, I did not think that the meeting could run so smoothly. She started by telling us how bad we were in our attitudes towards each other in committee meetings. This obviously had an impact, as people directed their opinions towards others opinions and not at a personal level. People must have thought about their own behaviour to have made such a marked improvement.

Personal accountability for the performance of leadership roles was daunting for some students and while some benefits were anticipated in waiting until one's confidence had built up before taking on such roles, the disadvantage of this strategy was that it was more difficult to take up responsible roles later in the semester. Because every student would have become familiar with processes and procedures by mid semester, a certain level of proficiency was expected of those leading and members of the group were less likely to accept poor performance on the basis of nervousness.

Lillian Week 5

I was nervous about giving a report about the subcommittee. I didn't feel fully prepared and probably wasn't but it wasn't that hard. Everyone now knows that the subcommittee is doing. During the meeting, I didn't have much to say except in the discussions. This concerned me because I am always aware that the more I propose and second, the more marks I get. This increases the tension for me within these meetings.

The leadership role performance of 'quieter' people was not always evaluated well by some of the more dominant personalities in their committees. Ilze, who from the beginning of semester had persistently made attempts to lead the committee, was, as she describes in the following quote, rather unimpressed by the style of management displayed by a colleague because of the effect 'weak leadership' had had on her subcommittee.

Ilze Week 7

The chairperson for this meeting was totally unsuited to this position. She was totally unorganised and frequently displayed that she did not know what was going on and frequently let the meeting slide into havoc. If it wasn't for the fact that the meeting was quiet, nothing would have come out of the meeting. This observation shows how an unorganised leader or chairperson can disrupt the entire process. A strong chairperson is needed in order to control the meeting and to direct it in the best direction. Seeing how weak leadership has nearly destroyed my subgroup, today made me understand that weak leadership could lead to the same havoc I have experienced in my subgroup. I feel lucky that for the last couple of weeks there has been strong leadership within the committee.

By taking up responsibility in various ways and being accountable to themselves and their groups, students experienced what it was like to be relied upon by others. For many, the rewards they gleaned from this experience related to a sense of confidence that they could take on professional responsibilities and be personally accountable as well as holding others accountable for their actions. An example of this process is given below in Angela's quote. It was not until Angela spent some time thinking about a particularly distressing meeting where she was unable to make herself heard, that she realized the connection between her disappointment with the chairperson who did not allow her to speak, and her volunteering to be secretary the following week.

Angela Week 6

I left the meeting feeling very frustrated and angry because I had my hand up several times to say something but was not recognised by the chair and therefore I did not get a chance to voice my opinions or propose anything. So much for protecting the weak and giving them a go! Now I see the importance of such an official meeting and particularly why a good chairperson is needed. I am secretary next week. Yes, me, the one who said I'd never do it. Why did I ask to be nominated? I don't know!

That weekend:

I was just reading through my diary and examining my last entry. I felt so angry on Thursday but I am thinking now that if we only have a limited time then why should it bother me so much? ...Reading last week's entry I can see now why I wanted to be secretary. I want to have some control over the meeting but I knew I couldn't push myself to be chairperson. Not yet anyway.

It is difficult to overcome established patterns of behaviour that have been learned from experience but which often cause one to respond in ways that are not beneficial in all contexts. Quite a number of students they were submissive and therefore unable to take on the responsibilities of leadership. As the simulation progressed, many students who had thought they were quiet and submissive, found opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities and to assert their authority. The processes involved in this transition were often uncomfortable and towards the end of the simulation students were beginning to understand why I had been so keen for them to have this experience. For instance, Cecily needed to first find the courage to try and then the daring to do what she had to do as one of the meeting leaders. She was keen to see that the person who was handing over work to her had met their responsibilities. And this was sufficiently difficult for her to reflect on the reasons for setting up the simulation.

Cecily Week 6

I just had to say how nervous I am today at the thought of being secretary at tomorrow's general meeting. I'm a bit annoyed too that last week's

secretary couldn't give me last week's minutes until tomorrow before the meeting. I think I would feel a lot more relaxed about it if I had them to look over and see how she ran it and what she actually recorded. But, never mind, I'll get through, I hope!!

The next day:

I think I understand now why Tracey wanted us to do this. It seems to be teaching us to stand up for our opinions and not to be afraid to have our say and to teach us how to handle ourselves in such heated moments. Today definitely gave me an indication that perhaps I'm not as submissive as I thought I was.

Most of the groups developed some system of evaluating the performance of the group and usually one or two students were elected to carry out weekly surveys and then feedback to the group the good or bad news on their performance. The peer evaluation strategy often developed as a way of holding students accountable for their behaviour and also to ensure that everyone was meeting their responsibilities for project work. In the quote below, Ilze describes the personal challenge she faced in having to 'honestly evaluate' her friends. As she reflected on her dilemma about evaluating her friends, she also began to understand why she had been put through the simulation.

Ilze Week 10

How will I feel when I have to honestly evaluate my other colleagues? Quite a few of these people are close friends and even though I'm sure the presentation will be excellent, how will I assess them? After the day, I will also reflect on the issues related to having to assess my fellow committee members.

Later that week:

From discussion it also seems as though other members of the subcommittee are also finally pulling their weight. But will it be enough? After all they have been slack for weeks... Another \$1 has been asked to be donated by each person. Will this be enough or will we again be under budget and realize that we need to donate even more money? This issue about money again highlights our inexperience in the field of committees and for that reason, Tracey, I now realize why you have put us through absolute Hell. I have benefited because now I would be semi-confident about attending a more professional committee.

Ken had already come to terms with his responsibilities in evaluating his colleagues and had even reached a point earlier in the semester where he realized just how important this responsibility was to his group. Towards the end of the semester he found that the group required a little encouragement to meet the standards of which he knew they were capable. He called on them to put in some extra time on the project, and they agreed.

Ken Week 10

Some members were absent. I detect a lack of enthusiasm or probably frustration. We needed to know whether what they were presenting would tie in. I became concerned when he said that he was in no position to have another meeting to clear things up because of assignment he had falling due. At this stage I felt it necessary to be assertive. We haven't come this far to lose it, no way...At this juncture I said it would be impossible for us to rely on the day of the presentation to sort things out. I said I would personally get in touch with them and organize a meeting on the weekend, to which he agreed. I was relieved.

I can only say that these last minute problems were a result of the pressure. However, being the group that we were, one did not expect any problems. In situations like these it becomes obvious how strong a group is when it can absorb some of the hard gusts of wind that can destroy what has been built. I think we felt as a group that we had too much invested in the project to allow anything to go wrong. In these exercises there was always some member in the group that would pull the others up. It was a combined effort...

Thinking back to Week ten when she had been worried about evaluating her friends, Ilze now realized that she had simply been anxious, or was she. It occurred to her that the anticipation of the burden of responsibility and worrying about being accountable to her friends and to her group, was worse than actually doing it. At the end of the simulation, she believed she felt more confident as a result of the experience.

Ilze Week 14

I expressed earlier, my apprehension about assessing my friends and colleagues. Luckily, all the presentations I assessed were excellent and very professional. Overall, all the fears I experienced before the presentation day were unnecessary. But then again, If I did not worry then, we might have been too relaxed and as a result our day may have flopped. Overall this subject has been very beneficial. After all, committee structures are very popular in nursing so If I were to participate in a committee or organize a health project I would be more confident about doing so.

As one of the quieter members of her committee, Marian realized that the opportunities to take on leadership roles that had been made available within this learning experience, had provided her with many valuable lessons that prepared her for 'real world' accountability. It had also consolidated her theoretical understanding of management accountability and group psychology.

Marian Week 12

The meetings overall have provided me, with valuable experience... As a chairperson and subgroup leader I was given the chance to learn leadership skills such as how to motivate people; how to turn ideas into actions; maintain order within the group; and how to encourage people to speak their opinion and ideas. As a subgroup leader I learnt that if you did not give people set jobs they would often not do anything, and bludge off the other members in the group who had done something.

The meetings run by us, provided each group with a valuable understanding about why meetings are formal and how to follow a set format. The meetings taught us how to work as a team. I believe these meetings were beneficial, and have helped prepare us to be accountable in the 'real world' of the health system.

There was no doubt in Wanda's mind that the experience of taking on responsibility had changed her. Earlier she had noticed the change from being quiet and submissive to being politely assertive. Now at the end of the simulation, she had no qualms about stating exactly how she felt. In her description below, she says the project was a lot of hard work involving people she did not like, but she admitted that she was more confident, assertive and wise as a result of the experience.

Wanda Week 14

Overall our group functioned well. Although I think some members did little because they are the types of people who need to be allocated with tasks... There were also the members who you could call 'silent achievers'. These people did many tasks and helped but did not make this known and often did not gain credit for certain tasks. I am usually one of these people, but I began like this and slowly changed. Well I noticed my change, others may not have.

I feel more confident and assertive after completing exercises like this one. To explain my feelings clearly I'm glad we had this assessment and feel positive about it, but I'm also glad it is over and I don't have to work with that group again. I began feeling enthusiastic and by the end I couldn't wait till it was over and the stress and pressure were gone. Now I feel happy and relieved. It just seemed like an awful lot of planning and work for a simple presentation. I'm glad it's over, but am more the wiser for it.

Travis had worked hard from the very first week and throughout the semester and had pursued every possible experience that the simulation offered with enthusiasm and persistence. In his final journal entry he acknowledged the extent to which his own personal development had been promoted because of this experience.

Travis Week 14

When I look back at the beginning of the semester, and remember Tracey describing the course outline and assessment, it seemed like an unachievable task, a mission impossible. But as I think about my own development over the past weeks, I not only acknowledge our huge effort by my committee and the general committee in the development of the activity, I also acknowledge my development, in areas of leadership, administrative development and within the areas of power, competition, political processes and friendship...

Tracey addressed us at the end of the presentation, congratulating us on our efforts and wishing us well. I think for a moment I understood how she felt. Seeing an idea, become reality and as successful as she had planned...Thanks Tracey.

Rewards flowing from knowing that responsibilities have been met and that one has done as well as possible, were in the sense of achievement that many students related in their journals in the final weeks of the simulation. The general air of excitement that students were feeling about their projects, and the completion of their degree, was palpable during the forums where they proudly spoke of their plans for presenting the projects on which they had worked so diligently.

Moira Week 10

Today's forum was again triumphant. Everyone is finalising their programs to present. It sounds all very exciting. The whole processes involved in this project are a real achievement for all of us and therefore triumphant for us and exciting as we can all show our hard work off.

One thing I've noticed about many of us students, including me is how horribly tired we look. I'm tired due to the late nights I've been working on this subject as well as everything else, ie. finding a job! and the other subjects. Not to mention this is the longest semester of the year. From my talking to others I am certain that our main time is spent in this subject. It's definitely a lot of work. I've spent most of my time on this subject. I often wonder if this much work is needed for this subject, but if we didn't do all this work we wouldn't get anything out of it. I'm really enjoying it. It may be hard work, however it's challenging and interesting.

Lillian's feelings of responsibility to the team meant that she was prepared to put in extra effort if necessary to ensure that the presentation was a success. When one member of the team failed to arrive for the presentation it was Lillian who volunteered to take responsibility and fill in for her. She describes below the reasons why she thought she could stand in for her absent colleague and perform very well. Because of the experience gained through this subject, she felt prepared for the challenge.

Lillian Week 13

Remember when I wrote 'If we can achieve these goals without you we will'? Well we did. Ashley did not turn up all day, I was really surprised but I did not panic. While our fearless leader was planning what to say to the audience I merely said, 'tell them that Ashley cannot be with us, but Lillian will present the information for you.'

I really believe that these past few weeks have prepared me for this. I did things that were amazing to me out of simple necessity. I knew that if we left out Ashley's section altogether, we would have lost marks and the entire committee would have suffered because of one irresponsible person (assuming of course that nothing horrible has happened to Ashley). I was not going to let that happen. We had all worked so hard and to have it ruined for us at the last minute would have been criminal.

I was absolutely amazed. Not only did I make it through my own presentation, but I stumbled my way through Ashley's as well. Apparently no one could tell that I hardly knew what I was saying but people came to me for advice after the presentation.

The success of the day showed me that our committee's desire for success was not so weak as to fall apart at the first stumbling block. We worked together as a team and finished as a team. We were all proud of each other... There have been certain things that I have learnt during and before this assessment (including) I am a person who thrives in the deep end because I refuse to sink.

There is no doubt that students who took responsibility for developing their projects were committed to do whatever was necessary to deliver a successful presentation. The final assessment of the subject was of the presentation itself and a small amount of assessment points were allocated to a group mark for the presentation because most of the learning occurred through their participation in the committees. Even so, most of the groups expected to receive a high mark for the presentation and when this did not occur, there was some disappointment which was assuaged somewhat with a full explanation of how marks were lost or gained on the day. Of all the students who experienced the simulation, one group, led by Alfred, challenged the assessment points given to their presentation by a tutor with whom they were not familiar.

Alfred had taken on an informal leadership role within his group and when the tutor who assessed their presentation deducted marks for various reasons, the group decided to utilise their new skills in challenging the mark that had been awarded. Alfred describes how he believed that he had developed these skills throughout the simulation and when the group asked him to bring the problem to my attention, he took on that responsibility even though he was nervous.

Alfred Week 13

This subject had enhanced my social skills and given me the groundwork to reflecting think and answer questions in a most appropriate manner. Not only had this aided me in my nursing interactions, it has helped me deal with situations which regard careful analysis and interactions. Examples of this, unfortunately have come about today. Fellow members have concerns over the marking system, (and the tutor who was allocated) to assess the groups performance. As our so called 'Group leader' I was asked to front and voice the groups feelings to Tracey.

During the consultation with Alfred, he was obviously prepared with evidence of all the preparatory work that had been completed by his group, the materials that had been used during the presentation and a detailed account of the presentation itself. He also put forward a convincing argument that because I had assessed all of the other groups, his group had been disadvantaged because of a timing clash that had been unavoidable causing another tutor to assess their presentation. Throughout the simulation I had repeatedly encouraged students to regard rules as negotiable and not be daunted by the seemingly impossible. What could I do?

Alfred Week 14

What an achievement! I felt so proud to be able to confidently represent my fellow members and professionally solve these mixed feelings. I felt somewhat 'unjust' toward this matter as I respect each and every lecturer for who they are. A resolution was sought and I thank you Tracey for your guidance in this matter. Well done Tracey! You have advanced most of the students in regards to professional standards. This subject has built upon my nursing knowledge and has proved vital skills. Thank you.

Accountability extended to the responsibility student felt towards their university. They wanted to bring honour upon their *alma mater* and their profession and to do this they realized that they would have to work together, even if they had to overcome their own nervousness. Many of the groups had decided to invite the media to attend their presentations and television, radio and print media responded to some of these invitations, making the level of accountability much higher than ever I had intended. When I had been approached by students planning to involve the media my only suggestion was that if they were intent on doing so, then they might consider how their presentation would contribute to the image of their university and their new profession. Charmaine's expressions of hope about the presentation typify the extent to which most of the students were prepared to be held accountable for their work.

Charmaine Week 8

Today in our committee meeting I finally realized how close the day is for our presentation. I can't really believe how fast this session is going. When starting this program it seemed that we had plenty of time to organize the event, but now that it is getting closer, we are starting to get really desperate. I just hope that we get everything done before the day arrives. I am not quite sure if I am actually looking forward to the day, as I have never done anything like this before, therefore I will be very nervous. I just hope that from all the work we have put into this project, it pays off and that the day will be a success for us and the students. I also hope that whatever happens on the day will not embarrass us and give the University a bad name. We have put a lot of work into this project and have tried our best to make the day a success, therefore we should be positively rewarded for our efforts. I would therefore be satisfied to know that the target group have learnt something from our visit.

Discussion

Throughout the journals there is ample evidence that students attempted to take up leadership roles and to perform well in these positions. Some students reported feeling pushed into taking up the leadership responsibility, for example Leigh's case, but the majority of students either surged forward to try their hand or waited and watched others until they built up enough confidence to try leading the group. A few students like Binnie and Moira became leaders in their own right and adopted informal

leadership roles that had a positive effect on the productivity and harmony of their committees because of the calming effects of their involvement on others in the groups.

A very strong element within this chapter concerns the level of review that students undertook regarding themselves and their colleagues. Many of them became quite skilled at analysing situations in terms of strategic advantage while some like Norah, Pamela and Pearl, went further and took strategic action based on their analysis.

Overall the majority of students developed the capacity to take on leadership responsibility and the self-confidence to perform well in these roles. Throughout the simulation issues around leader credibility were frequently raised and a few groups experienced what could be described as a backlash against some leaders whose credibility was questioned by some of the quieter students. For the first few weeks these quieter people analysed the content of what was being said and formed their own views as to the credibility of the information being presented and the person presenting it. Irene and Winifred were quite critical of outspoken colleagues however within the overall student experience as reflected in the journals, it seems that some of the more outspoken people came to appreciate the power of 'seldom-heard voices'.

Backlash strategies against leaders were invariably influenced by competition. Judith, Moira and Annie used credibility to justify one leader's overthrow, while Angela openly criticized Valerie saying her work lacked credibility. Maxine halted debate during one meeting and demanded that the person seconding a motion explain why they supported it, a backlash strategy that sent shock waves around the committees.

A fairly clear picture has emerged regarding what students are likely to accept as credible leadership. For example, Beth believed that a credible leader should be well prepared, know the rules and have a plan. Tina could see the value in reflecting on past errors of judgement and if necessary, fixing problems retrospectively. Angela thought that leaders needed to be able to motivate others while Mairi and Wanda valued personal credibility in their leaders.

In some instances it seems that students' expectations of others in leadership positions by far exceeded any such expectations they had of themselves in the same situations. Beth, Chani and Angela were very critical of a colleague's efforts to chair a meeting and while some expressed disappointment in the lack of control that occurred, others in the same meeting thought that authority had been over-asserted.

Part of the skill of leadership is the ability to see what is happening within the group of people and to accept any personal ambiguity or inner turmoil that often accompanies the performance of leadership roles. From evidence in the student journals it seems that students developed expectations of people in leadership positions as a result of experiencing and observing others dealing with the pressures associated with being a leader. While the ways in which students expressed these sentiments may differ, many came to understand the links between theoretical concepts of leadership and behaviours associated with the pressures of actual leadership, management and the preservation of personal integrity. For instance Sheryl noticed that those with loud voices were dominating the meetings and preventing others from being heard. However, while Mairi and Judith expressed disappointment at the selfishness of such people, Charmaine judged them as self-serving while Rowena who admitted being occasionally noisy herself, thought it was unfair that quiet people were denied a voice.

Angela's observations were that quiet people had a lot to offer but needed to get over being shy and participate anyway. John noticed how nervous he and other people were as leaders but this did not deter him from trying. Ros, John and Bert all agreed that some of the leaders simply enjoyed the feeling of being in the top position but they could see that enjoyment of status and prestige alone did not always facilitate wise decisions.

Mariah commented on wanting to get involved in project work rather than leading but still, she insisted on being acknowledged by the committee for the work she accomplished. There were many students who admitted their commitment to winning yet conceded that competitive energy needed to be channelled into achieving group goals. Ken's observations on what he regarded as 'healthy competition' were insightful as was Sandra's appreciation of the value of individual work within the overall project.

Marjorie concluded following several experiences in her committee that power was a good thing for a leader to have but it should not be abused. Marilyn also suspected that there must be a better way to encourage people to participate than to reward those with a tendency to dominate. Rowena was especially irritated by leaders who were unreliable and stated her firm view that if you seize leadership then you must do the job. She also endorsed the assessment system that could expose those who expected to be carried by colleagues in terms of the workload.

A major aspect of this research was discovering how students perceive leadership. Simply put, students discovered that domination does not equate with leadership and

that those who assume they are born to be leaders may not have the level of credibility required by those who are deliberating on whom to follow, a point clearly made by Ivanna and Tina. Throughout the journals the realization that domineering people may be more noisy and irritating than credible, was something that many students commented upon. Most students who subscribed to a view of themselves as leaders regarded the responsibility quite differently to those who initially did not see themselves as leaders. For instance Frank thought that he became the leader because of the apathy of other students. Similarly, Sandra envisioned herself as a warrior defending her weak colleagues rather than as an aggressive invader.

Another interesting array of perspectives concerned who wanted to lead. Most of the men in the group were attracted to the status and power of being the chairperson and in fact, men dominated this position across the student cohort for the first half of the simulation. Acceptance of men as leaders seemed to be commonplace among women such as Amy, Harriet and Elma who admired strong leaders even though they did not agree that aggressiveness was the same as strong leadership. Some men, like Craig, took up early leadership and, because his past experience in leadership roles, he believed that he needed to be loud and directive as chairperson. An interesting observation was made by Ros who, even though she did not support the automatic ascendancy of men to leadership positions, was interested in modelling on male behaviour which seemed to her to be effective.

A number of issues emerge from this discussion for women who might aspire to leadership roles. If leadership in nursing and other health professional groups is 'male-coded' in terms of leaders needing the 'voice of authority', assertiveness, distanced emotion, authoritarian posturing, working to a strategic agenda and claiming to have the power to approve or disapprove of others, then how will women respond? Will it be necessary for women and indeed men, to adopt stereotypical male-coded behaviour in order to progress to bureaucratic and organisational leadership positions? Or perhaps aggressive styles of leadership may gain ascendancy as people develop different styles of management and increase their capacity to take up leadership positions?

The questions raised above are matters for future research however not all students adopted male-coded styles of leadership. Some other men and women in the simulation commented on a range of moderating expectations of leaders. Students like Marian, Caroline and Eliza endorsed ideals like competence, generosity and equity as desirable attributes for leaders. Ros could see that leaders needed to have authority

but did not want it abused. Blaise felt the same way about having an authoritative voice which she thought should not be used to shout down the opposition. Those who dominated others were harshly judged by Robert, Marjorie and Charmaine who believed such behaviour contributed little and undermined the group's interests.

It was interesting to note who was given support when they were in the leadership position. Generally friends supported friends where they were in the same groups, but as the simulation progressed, students became more discerning about who warranted their support. Mostly students analysed leadership behaviour and styles of meeting management as a basis for their alliance decisions and it is possible that early leaders set role expectations upon which others felt they should model their own behaviour. Even so, Ken, Peggy and Norah seemed keen observers of leader behaviour throughout the simulation. Mairi was critical of laissez-faire approaches and Beth made lengthy entries in her journal about different styles of leadership. For some of these students their reflections on allocating allegiances resulted in decisions to actively resist domination and in a few instances involving Paula, Mavis and Sheryl, to overthrow the person in the leadership role. Frank, Charmaine, Norah and Lillian developed their own strategies to avoid domination by others but essentially it was insights gained through the simulation that enabled them to make such decisions.

The opportunity to compare the progress on one's own group with that of others during the weekly student forums had the effect of developing students' skills and insights as leaders as well as enhancing perceptions of team responsibilities. Evaluation of the forums varied however. Lillian and Pearl valued the forums because of opportunities to gather ideas, however other students like Peggy regarded this practice as stealing. Peggy and Dean went so far as to reflect on the ethics associated with some people taking ideas expressed at forum presentations. Throughout most of the journals there was evidence of increased student understanding of how people behave in professional teams and what should be occurring in terms of collaboration and communication.

Students learned to appreciate the positive aspects of what they were doing as a group. Many had to learn to work with people whom they did not know well. A further confounding aspect of group work was the size of the teams. Kerlyn, Beth and Ilze had to cope with very large groups while Mairi focused on the differences between large and small groups as they affected team dynamics and communication.

In summary, the insights shared by students in the quotes above create a picture of what it is like to work within a team of people who tend to be opinionated and determined to win. Whether this interpretation is somewhat stronger than the students intended is debatable when the accounts of Cydne, Leigh, Sheryl, Robert and Lydia are considered. Part of the problem was identified by Alice, Judith and Ros who were concerned that good ideas were being lost through not being presented forcefully or because the person presenting the idea was unpopular. As a lesson in team dynamics and a way of explicating the foibles that motivate individuals within groups, this experience was incredibly valuable. Eventually the teams settled into a productive rhythm, perhaps because of time pressure as suggested by Estelle, Jean and Lydia, or perhaps as suggested by Jack and Holly, it was a stage of development that the group would have reached anyway.

For most students the decision to try for a leadership position or role took courage and sometimes daring, if it involved an election. Fanny, Ivanna and Estelle found the decision to take action particularly challenging. But for many others, becoming leaders seemed to be part of the challenge that students accepted and each needed to face their own difficulties in reaching the decision. For others the decision was more related to finding a way to finally be heard than any overt grapple for power.

Responsibility and accountability for leadership was something that most students considered at some time during the simulation. For a few students like Dean, there was a feeling that leadership responsibility had been forced upon them and when they could not satisfy the demands of the role, they were undermined to the point of being asked to resign from the position. Other students like Wanda and Angela continued to want teachers and chairpersons to step in and solve dilemmas and problems rather than the students who were being rowdy and uncooperative.

On the whole, most students believed that they had learned what was required of leaders. Thelma learned a valuable lesson when she helped oust one leader only to find a less competent person appointed. Emily began the simulation with issues about gender dominance but as she interacted with men and others in leadership positions her fears subsided and confidence grew.

The range and variety of narratives provided by the students indicate that during the semester their knowledge and skills about leadership increased and as a result of their experience in this simulation, they believed that their capacity to be leaders was enhanced.

Chapter 6: Political skills and ability

As a service to the general community, nursing occurs predominantly within a bureaucratic health system environment that comprises government services, non-government agencies and the private commercial sectors of the health system. Wherever nursing services occur, the organisation of work and practice systems depends on the extent and type of resources that are available to support the management and delivery of services. The public health system is not immune to the effects of resource scarcity and nurses soon discover the competition that occurs around the control of resources such as government subsidies or grants, as well as competition to influence the structure, type and availability of health services. Individuals and groups working within the health system often become involved with political strategies in the hope of enhancing their group's interests, sometimes against the interests of other competitors in the race to influence health resources.

At a very basic level, familiarity with bureaucratic processes such as formal committees and individual accountability within teams, can advantage graduates who take up work in various health organisations and especially in service agencies that depend on periodic grants for their ongoing survival. Because much of the bureaucratic competition for resources and influence is the work of organisational leaders, or conducted between organisations vying for funding, professionals working in clinical units may be relatively unaware of political activities happening around them concerning funding, staffing, equipment, projects, recognition or status. Nurses, as with most clinicians, are more likely to focus their attention on clinical assessment, treatment, support and protection of clients and patients, than on ways to influence the allocation of resources necessary for them to deliver their clinical services.

Political awareness of how resources and rewards are allocated and the ways in which people behave in order to influence such allocations, often develops as a result of personal experience of competitive environments and first-hand knowledge of the consequences of both winning and losing. Regrettably, political processes such as alliance building, lobbying, networking and taking strategic action, while integral to all contemporary professional environments, are not easily taught or understood through theoretical presentations in lectures and tutorial sessions.

The university in which this simulation was run was subjected to similar political forces and issues raised in discussion at the beginning of this thesis. It was no surprise therefore that students reacted strongly to the competitive and political elements of this

simulation. Some were excited by the prospect of learning how to manage political aspects of their professional activities while others felt lost and intimidated until they found ways to cope within this new and challenging milieu.

Student focus on power and politics varied in intensity over the course of the semester. It is possible that some of the observed variation in student responses could be attributed to the effect of scheduled clinical practicum and mid-semester breaks which allowed some more time for reflection than others. The sequence and timing of the six weeks of clinical practice placements varied between semesters and depended on the availability of clinical opportunities. Details of the semester structure are provided in the appendices. For some students, reflections on experiences during these clinical practice placements enhanced insights concerning health system politics. By observing shifts in influence and strategies used by nurses and others employed in clinical and management roles, students were able to relate the theoretical and practical learning derived from the simulation, to what they observed in what many termed 'the real world.'

Students with prior experiences of the health care industry were generally less surprised at the simulation parameters because at work they had often observed competitive and politically charged situations, similar to that being simulated. When Mona realized at the beginning of the semester that this subject would address some of the political aspects of working in the health industry she was immediately interested.

Mona Week 1

Thank God! Finally, someone is going to teach us how to play the political game and some rules as well! A very interesting and powerful first lecture that made me feel good.

I had been having a discussion with some colleagues at work two days ago. They couldn't see the point in entering data such as patient categories and times into the new computers given to us by the Department of Health. I was trying to convince them to enter the truth even if it made us look bad because then someone might realise we have a real staffing problem verging on dangerous. If staffing levels don't permit us to get our work done, well so be it. Don't enter data to make us look good because we are not! But the old nurse mentality is still there, work your butt off, don't rock the boat and don't claim for 'no meal break allowance' because the hospital is already over budget! (Because of Medico's outrageous payments usually!).

Understanding the operation of power

An important aspect of the simulation was to encourage students to be assertive, a characteristic of successful leaders in all fields of work. Assertiveness is something about which nurses often express mixed feelings when the topic is discussed. My perception of assertiveness, built over three decades of nursing experience, is that an assertive person is able to express their feelings, their needs and ideas and are able to defend themselves and their rights, and those of others. At the same time, the assertive person has integrity, that is, they choose to do the right thing even though the consequences may be uncomfortable, and they are concerned to preserve the integrity of those with whom they interact. Relationships that assertive people establish can enable them to be self-determining and to avoid being manipulated or encouraged by others into acting against their own and other people's needs or interests. The end result, I believe, is that assertive people are more likely to feel confident and competent while being less likely to feel threatened by the ability and assertiveness of others.

Because of the placement of the simulation in the final year of their degree, students were aware through previous studies in psychology and mental health that there are different approaches to assertiveness. Practical experiences on clinical placement also enabled students to understand assertive behaviours ranging from basic refusal or insistence on an idea, to finding a way of resolving an issue that allows all to perceive benefits. It was therefore desirable that the simulation provide opportunities for students to extend skills learned during earlier studies and apply them more broadly to professional interactions within a politically competitive environment.

Information presented during lectures and forums was to raise awareness of political behaviours such as factional splitting and the formation of alliances. This can be difficult to achieve when within the health industry environment nurses and others often work with people they do not know well, and within sets of rules that may be unfamiliar. To be effective in this environment, skills are needed in analysing political environments and operating effectively within bureaucratic systems. Reacting on purely emotional levels is generally unproductive. Effective participation in teams, committees and groups involves individual commitment and effort as well as understanding that different types of team interactions can affect a group's ability to achieve its goals.

From the first week of semester many students used their popularity, strong personalities, booming voices and the like, to gain political profile within their groups. Because of the way in which assessment points were applied within the simulation,

opportunities to maximise their own assessment points and also establish control over the direction of their project team, were seized by the more assertive students. Details of the assessment system are provided in the Appendices. Also in Week one, there was obvious strategic activity by some students who had already decided which aspects of their behaviour would attract assessment points for group participation.

One of the first political imperatives seemed for most students, to be to establish themselves as a powerful presence within the committees. Most students found this to be a complex task and in the quote below, Estelle describes the difficulties she perceived in overcoming restrictions on personal freedom of expression during the committee meetings. As she reflected on the differences between the committee format and previous tutorials, she began to realize the extent to which she was disempowered within this new system.

Estelle Week 1

This meeting was successful in the way that it got the ball rolling... A difficulty of the meeting though was taking notice of the chairperson. Wanting to say something within a tutorial class was easy, you just waited for a break in the conversation, and you just said what you wanted to say. In a committee you have to wait for the chair to recognise you. It is a difficult system to get used to, but it appears the only way that things can get done in such a large group.

For some students, there were advantages generated by widespread uncertainty about this new system. One such advantage was perceived by Gill who thought that it provided opportunities to alter established impressions that others might have of him and his ability to wield power. The political consequences of behaving quite differently was something Gill wondered about. He was about to take on a powerful role and anticipated some reaction from his group who had not previously seen him as a stern person capable of exerting power and control.

Gill Week 2

I'm a bit worried about tomorrow. I've been nominated chairperson and I am a bit scared as to how things go. I've never done anything like this before. Sure, I've told people what to do before and organized groups, but the rigid format of these meetings scares me. I don't know if this feeling is due to the fact that I don't understand the format, or is it a deep seated problem I have with order? Well only time will tell. It will be interesting to see how the group reacts to me as they are not used to seeing me when I am serious.

When considering political environments it is not unusual to focus on differences between people and to estimate the effect these differences may have on the balance of power between them. For instance, student age differences were identified by Paula

who was worried about having to work so closely with younger students who might not accept her. Her journal entry in Week one indicates a beginning analysis of the potential effects of age differences on group interaction and her opportunities to influence the group through her ideas.

Paula Week 1

I'm a bit worried about the size of our group and how the interaction will be between everyone. Will there be conflict between the younger and the older members of the group? Will there be some who will not really want to participate and will be happy to rest on everyone else's laurels. Maybe I will be considered to be too old to have any original ideas...Time will tell the outcome but I'm sure that it will be interesting, frustrating at times, but most of all, a good learning experience...

I feel that maybe there will be conflict in the group. A lot of students seemed to be stunned by the project. I know I was, and there were a lot of mystified looks as to how the final outcome was going to be achieved. Many of the students have not had the chance to liase, in a professional manner, with the public and maybe they were feeling a little overawed. All in all this was a day to be remembered with everyone not quite believing what has transpired today.

The competitive environment in which students operated during the first few weeks, frequently resulted in what many termed 'power struggles'. In essence these passionate interactions occurred as a result of escalating assertiveness by students, all bent on having their own ideas and methods endorsed by the group. In some instances determination to win resulted in aggressive behaviour. My perception of aggressiveness involves people who insist on articulating their own ideas and needs at the expense of other people's ideas and needs. Aggressive people may be capable of defending themselves but they often exceed the bounds of assertiveness by trying to dominate others in order to achieve their own outcomes.

I was aware that in learning to be assertive, students could experience various levels and types of assertive interactions and in some instances, learn to deal effectively with colleagues whose behaviour is more aggressive than assertive. Such experiences were an integral aspect of the simulation and I took care to closely monitor student behaviour and where necessary, intervene if stress arising from aggressive behaviour approached anywhere near the types of aggressiveness frequently encountered by nurses throughout the health industry. Nurses working in the Australian health industry are often exposed to aggressive behaviour. Harulow (2000) noted that:

in a violent world, violence against nurses rarely makes the headlines and when it does it is usually because a nurse had been killed or because the violence has been particularly savage. (p. 26-29)

In fact it was established in a report by the Australian Institute of Criminology (1999) that the health industry is the most violent industry in Australia and that registered nurses comprise the second highest number of violence-related workers' compensation claims, that is, higher than prison or police officers. The level of stress generated by the simulation was therefore quite mild compared with the work environment that most of the students expected to enter as registered nurses.

There is no doubt that learning to respond assertively to aggressive people is uncomfortable however, through moderately stressful encounters within the simulation, students gained valuable insights into their own responses as well as those of their colleagues. Endurance of uncomfortable and irritating situations takes considerable strength of character, courage and personal insight. Being able to endure stress and to function under pressure is something that nurses need to be able to do rather than responding emotionally or unthinkingly to the cause of stress which may for example, be a client whose behaviour is abusive.

It is important however that endurance not be confused with avoidance of conflict or confrontation due to a lack of courage. The simulation provided students with situations riddled with challenging behaviours of colleagues and opportunities to gauge the limits of forbearance and endurance as well as the timeliness of assertiveness. It also enabled students to be aware of their own responses to stressful situations and to persevere when emancipatory strategies did not seem to be working. Cognisant of the need to ameliorate risks, I ensured that I was available to provide whatever level of consultation students needed to be able to develop their political insights and skilful responses to threatening situations.

Kerlyn was aware of struggles for control and dominance happening within her committee and although she was one of the more vocal students, she found the aggressiveness of colleagues disappointing and concluded that struggles for power were the source of their problems. As she observed what was happening in the meetings, she felt some responsibility to less assertive students who, from the beginning of the subject, seemed to need her protection.

KerylIn Week 1

I feel that within our group there are a number of members who do not believe in negotiation. They are determined to have their own way of thinking. I also do not understand the logical reasoning for some people's actions...

Many of our problems as a group derived from the power struggles occurring. Within our group are several dominant members who threaten to

eclipse those with quieter dispositions. Ideally, I would like each member's contribution to be valued and encouraged. To achieve this I am intending to nominate the quieter members as chairpersons and secretaries where possible.

Kerlyn's determination to act on behalf of the quieter members of her group is an example of advocacy skills that students learn during their undergraduate nursing program. Advocacy is an important aspect of professional nursing and is fundamental to the support and protection roles that nurses undertake for patients who are in no condition or position to self-advocate. This type of advocacy can take many forms including facilitating better communication, teaching self-care skills, or reallocation of resources or even initiating changes in policy and regulation affecting the disadvantaged person or group being assisted by the nurse. Essentially, a nurse advocate takes steps to alter power relationships or structures to improve the situation or opportunities available to disadvantaged or vulnerable people. While most nurse advocacy is related to supporting clients or teaching them how to manage independently, it can also involve helping others to use power in a ways that produce outcomes that they need or want. By protecting the ability of clients to be autonomous and self-determining, nurses may need to assert on behalf of the client and this can sometimes require nurses, for example, to question treatment decisions by other professionals involved with the care of that client. It is necessary therefore for nurses to be able to understand power, to be able to work out who has it and how it may be used to achieve ethical outcomes. Through the simulation opportunities were provided for students to learn the difference between assertiveness and aggressiveness and to become more effective advocates for themselves and others.

In Binny's group there is no doubt that some students were aggressive. It did not take long for the group to polarize into those who tried to dominate the group and those who endured them. In the quote below, Binny attempts to analyse what was making her group behave in this way. During the first week, she identified several factors that allowed power to operate in particular ways, including the formation of political factions at one of the meetings. It seemed that her fears about the group were being realised.

Binny Week 1

The follow-up meeting resulted in the emergence of some worrying signs that there could be dysfunction in group dynamics from now on... We were all as naive as each other regarding the whole damn process, and generally being obstructive and damaging in their reluctance to listen to anyone else's ideas. Suddenly, the group has become polarized into an 'us and them' situation, and an environment of distrust and suspicion which I

was desperately hoping could be avoided, especially so early on, has been created.

A first step in analysing power can be to identify dominant factions and to estimate their current and potential influence over the resources in question. Most students entered the simulation with a basic understanding of organisational power and when they applied that knowledge to an analysis of their own groups, students like Ilze, quickly reached some conclusions on the various power struggles that occurred during Week one. As a result of her strategic analysis, Ilze predicted a power struggle between 'quiet' and 'aggressive' students yet she was aware of the need for more information before forming a view as to the outcome.

Ilze Week 1

The organisation of the committee leaves quieter members unable to get a word in. This could lead to two outcomes. Firstly, the quieter members will start to fight for their right to make decisions; or secondly, those people could become pushed into the background by the more aggressive members of the committee. On this matter I cannot express my doubts until I have at least experienced a few committee meetings. But during those weeks, my focus will be on the above concerns as well as the functioning of the committee.

Few students felt comfortable with the displays of power that were occurring in their committees. During the early weeks of the simulation some students, such as Therese, began to differentiate between different types of power and also attribute the ways people used this power in terms of their personalities. Therese's analysis of the situation was that the entire subject was a power game based on personalities.

Therese Week 3

I'm finding that these meetings are beginning to show people's personalities, who is dominant and who is not, me! Basically this subject is turning into one big power game. So far I find that the power has mainly been personal except with the chairperson where it is positional power.

Even students who enjoyed being able to influence the committee, found that there were limitations on their power exerted through the committee rules and also because of a certain sensitivity to the opinions of others. Claudia describes below, the counterbalance between having power while also being aware that others may have been offended by her powerful behaviour.

Claudia Week 4

I like being chairman, however, I can't wait for when I can be involved in open discussion again. I think everyone is getting a little annoyed with my enjoyment of the power that comes with being chairman and will be glad when someone new takes over. I must admit the power did go to my head a little. I just hope nothing said in the meetings gets taken personally. We

all want to do the best we can and sometimes I have noticed people are a little harsh when it comes to opposing other's proposals.

Through monitoring and analysing the changes in the distribution of power among alliances and factions within their committees, many students were interested in identifying the different types of power they observed and understanding how certain people came to possess power and influence within their groups.

Lectures and debates about the dynamics of power, or rather, how the ability to wield power is achieved by people, prompted several students to reflect on where the real power resided in their committees, and who controlled it, as well as identifying struggles for power and control between committee members. Reflections also included observations of the effect of rules on how people behave. These were the most frequently mentioned concerns in this first week of semester.

The simulation encouraged students to control all aspects of these other meetings and work groups and also how they wished to record and report on subcommittee activities. As tutors were present only in the one main committee meeting each week, students had opportunities to schedule other subcommittee meetings where they could experiment with various meeting formats and ways to record activities. Lillian expressed concerns about who held the power in committees because she thought once she knew that, she could adapt her political strategies to match.

Lillian Week 1

The meeting progressed, everyone awkwardly trying to impress. Who to impress? The chairperson or Tracey? Since the chairperson can tell Tracey to shut up, I'll try to impress the chair and get myself heard... I guess we find out just what we have gotten ourselves into from here on.

In Binny's opinion the absence of a tutor made the committee more relaxed but this allowed some students to behave more aggressively.

Binny Week 1

Although the functioning of the committee was more relaxed and informal without the presence of the tutor, it became evident that certain individuals had become somewhat obsessive about point scoring and were aggressively jumping in with proposals which deviated radically from the majority opinion. Not only that, but they insisted on blocking other people's ideas by talking over them louder and more forcefully arguing over committee procedures...

This pathetic squabbling and power game playing is the kind of bullshit I despise in politicians, and it is disturbing to witness these games being enacted by my classmates over such pretty and inconsequential matters. Why can't people keep a hold on their egos and have the sense and vision to view the whole picture, in perspective and from a distance, instead of within the limitations of their own blundering opinions? Why have a drama

when finding solutions is so much easier, more productive and unifying. I believe that unity, especially in the face of adversity, is a powerful force, and that nurses, especially, because of the stressful nature of their work, need to stick together and support each other and promote a sense of team spirit. This meeting was a downer, I hope it is not a sign of things to come.

In several of the journals students reflected on the different ways they interacted depending on the presence or absence of tutors. Julia tried to analyse the effect my absence had on their meeting while Harriet concluded that my absence enabled students to dispense with 'official jargon'.

Julia Week 4

Tracey wasn't at the meeting today and it was one of the shortest meetings we have had! Is there some connection? Tracey usually doesn't butt in (for want of a better word) unless we ask. Maybe it was because we didn't have to be quite as formal in the structure of the meeting. Or maybe, it was because we decided that we wanted an early mark. We did a lot in the last meeting I suppose.

Harriet Week 4

This meeting seemed to run much smoother than any previous meeting. Without being rude I think it had a little to do with Tracey not being there. Without Tracey we seem to skip a lot of the official bits and get straight into decision-making. I know that this will not in the future, help our learning process, but we still seem to get caught up in official jargon. I don't think the group can run officially without assistance from Tracey. Therefore we seem to take on our own methods that seem to work for us. I also realize that this shouldn't be done and in the future we should be able to make decisions during an official meeting. But for now I think this type of meeting is all we can handle.

Claudia also noticed that even though the tutor did not interact much when sitting in the committees, student interaction was affected. For her the issue was about the locus of control that tutors retained even when they said very little, and as a result it was difficult to overcome a desire to impress the tutor.

Claudia Week 4

On a positive side I thought a lot of good ideas flowed today. This was because there was no time wasted on committee reports and I also think we were a little more comfortable without you Tracey because, although you don't intrude, we know you are there and sometimes the whole committee's performance is aimed at pleasing you. I think we are getting better at our meetings but I'm afraid although we discuss lots of things etc. we are getting stuck on fine details. Hopefully we will have sorted ourselves out soon.

Locus of control related to hierarchical position and professional roles was also considered by Bert. His analysis of the political influences within his committee led him to the conclusion that the group was more productive without a tutor. During Week four, Bert discovered that he was more aware of why some meetings ran well and others

not, and also why some people were able to lead while others had difficulty doing so. As he pondered on aspects of power and politics and linked these ideas to his previous experiences of powerful teams, he began to wonder whether he could be a powerful chairperson.

Bert Week 4

Today's meeting turned out to be a bit of a joke. The chairman to be honest was hopeless. He didn't have the ability to control the meeting professionally. I know him really well, so to a large degree it didn't surprise me. He is what you could call a 'nice guy', he doesn't like to be too dominant. But to be a chairperson I think you have to be somewhat controlling or dominant, and to some degree aggressive. It would be interesting to see how I would go.

The next day:

Guess what? People are finally admitting that they enjoy this subject. I think a lot of people were like me, in that once they learn about the meeting process, and know what they are doing, they actually enjoy the subject. To me I feel the meetings are a bit like rugby league games. You get prepared for the game, and once in the game you have your tactics, your dominant players. And last of all talk about how both you went individually, and how the whole team went. And I suppose some people come out with injuries, even if it is to their pride.

Power-limiting mechanisms were used by several committees who were reluctant to delegate authority to individual members or even to subcommittees. The emergence of 'red-tape' bureaucracy in some committees was as a direct consequence of previous power struggles between factional groups. For Jean, whose role involved negotiating with the representative of the community organisation in which the project was to be presented, these limits on her authority made a difficult role even more so. She found that without the trust and support of the committee, she and her colleague had to rely on their own powers of persuasion and expertise to engage successfully with the community leader regarding their committee project.

Jean Week 5

Continual hassles leading up to the introductory meeting with [community leader]. Our committee has voted for us to be given no power, not even for negotiation. This has put us in a tight spot as we are supposed to work out a topic with [community leader] but this is a little difficult with no power to negotiate. Meeting with the rest of the committee before the meeting in an attempt to overturn this decision...

By Week five students began to realize that their subcommittees were a source of power and influence. Work completed in subcommittees was recorded in the minutes and therefore attracted assessment points and some students were keen to maintain control over all the work allocated to them. In some committees the output of work

from one subcommittee was needed before another subcommittee could commence their work.

Invariably, students were quite interested in understanding how power moved between people depending on what they were doing and who they were. Ilze was paying attention to the benefits of group leaders having and wielding power to get work completed. But she also realized that power is not always easy to manage.

Ilze Week 6

Today, I found the functional ability of the group to have improved, for we have discovered what we have to do and also how to achieve those goals. One problem I saw in regard to the subcommittee is collecting all the relevant data, for we have had trouble getting subgroups to hand in their aims and objectives. This trouble has led to us being really nasty and placing due dates on the subgroup's presentation reports. Also we have been forced to put penalties on any that are submitted late. These drastic measures really show how you have no friends within the committee. But the measures were necessary for otherwise we would have had to hound the subgroups for the relevant information and as a result we would have had very little time in order to complete the work.

Some students reflected on how power and control strategies seemed to work within the committees and the types of variables that either enhanced or reduced these strategies. Issues around the maintenance of friendships within the committees emerged throughout the journals and in almost every case, there was a realization by students that pre-existing friendships sometimes influenced the business dealings of formal committee meetings. By observing their own and other students' styles of leadership as they chaired meetings and gave presentations, some students like Frank also noticed the power associated with personal relationships as they affected people's decisions regarding asserting their ideas in meetings.

Frank Week 6

Now that we have had a number of Tutorial meetings it is easy to see different leadership styles exhibited by different group members. Some people are overbearing and let the power go to their heads, whilst other people seem afraid to make decisions, and have no control over the meetings. I think this is because some people think that they will lose friends if they make a decision that someone else does not like. Therefore they are 'passing the buck' so they do not get blamed for what happens in the meeting.

Something else I have noticed is that some people will say nothing in the meetings whilst others open their mouths whenever they get the chance. I'm sure a lot of people are doing this, not because they have something to contribute to the group, but because they want to earn extra points in the assessment.

Of course the phenomenon observed by Frank was interpreted in different ways by other students. Marjorie perceived herself as one of the 'quieter students' but she described herself and those like her, as 'weak' compared with the 'powerful' ones. In her reflections on what must have been a frustrating experience for her, Marjorie began to question the behaviour of these more powerful students and the way they used their friendship networks to political advantage.

Marjorie Week 6

The point struggle still continues. Everybody is concerned with getting points. At least now we are getting some suggestions down and we have got some direction towards what we are supposed to be doing. The chairperson today tended to use their authority and concentrated on giving attention to their friends. Their friends could talk whenever they wanted but everyone else had to talk when they were allowed to talk

While Letitia did not mention friendships as a moderating influence on political behaviour, she did observe that some students had established joint understandings about issues prior to the meetings. As she did not really know the other students and was unfamiliar with the rules governing committee activities, she felt she was in no position to lobby for political support for her own ideas. She did not believe her situation was an isolated one and had succeeded in gaining group support for an idea that would compensate for her sparse political network.

Letitia Week 6

Statements made during the meeting made me realize that members of the committee had developed their own plan for the presentation and had already canvassed their idea with other committee members, who had given their tacit approval, therefore, the group may have felt threatened by a competing idea. Also, the group may have felt that I was operating as an individual and not as a committee member. I did not wish to operate as an individual, however, I knew no-one on the committee and had not had any contact from anyone, even my subcommittee leader, therefore, I had no alternative. It is for this reason that I decided last week to propose having a list of committee members' names and contact numbers made available to all group members.

As stated earlier I have no awareness of the workings of subcommittees and whether I, as an individual, have any right to have input into the workings of other subcommittees or only the one I am assigned to. I am unclear about my role and feel that I am not the only person who misunderstands.

Perhaps because in the early weeks students relied on friendships in order to pursue their political agendas, when these strategies failed, invariably students perceived any defeat of their own political tactics as personal attacks. Emily was unable to think of the group's rejection of her ideas as anything but personal and was prompted to observe ways in which people allowed their emotional attachments to inform project decision-

making. Emily's political strategy involved engaging others in discussion about ways in which some students had used emotional influence.

Emily Week 3

This meeting today was the first in which proposals were rejected and mine was the first of these! I found this pretty hard to take and it is difficult not to take things that happen in meetings personally. I had done as planned, deciding first what positive action our group needed to take, discussing it with other members (who seemed enthusiastic) and then entering the meeting with my proposal in writing. However all of those who had agreed with me prior to the meeting were swept along with the opinion of another more authoritative member. I have observed people not only voting with friends but members objecting on the basis of personal dislikes. This has been noticed by other members also.

Audrey reflected in her journal on the formation of alliances among students who were less outspoken in order to deal with a colleague who seemed powerful. In the quote below she examines the usefulness of establishing a 'them and us' situation when the details are not yet known. It is obvious too that Audrey had learned to be circumspect around some types of information in order to maintain a strategic advantage.

Audrey Week 10

Within our committee group we have formed allies and enemies. One member with power today was an enemy. As if to fulfil our wishes she performed poorly in her position. Possibly this was because we were too quick to judge her or perhaps she sensed the hostility. This has taught me that you need to have mutual understanding and respect for others in the group for the group to work effectively, but, respect must be earned. We didn't tell the rest of the committee that our small group is panicking. It would be a waste of time and cause senseless argument.

Through observations of their own performance and that of others in various committee roles, most students found opportunities for analysis of power-related behaviours as they affected their own and their groups' agendas. By far the most dominant feature of journal entries about power and politics, around the middle of the semester, was how power affected work and personal relationships. As students became more comfortable with the business processes of committee meetings and the management of project working groups, they were able to concentrate on why people were behaving as they did. As the simulation progressed students began to observe the subtle, and sometimes less subtle, shifts in power that accompanied achieving group acknowledgement through the production of work that benefited the project.

By Week five, students usually developed greater self-confidence and a desire to exert control over all aspects of their activities and the debates raised in the forums became

more insightful and political. No topic was safe and some groups challenged the assessment of the subject in public debate.

Moir Week 5

Forum. Everyone sounded confused, I'm not alone... Well the marking of our tutorial participation has started a fire beneath all of us, to begin the competition for marks. It really has developed a power struggle among all of us. I hope it doesn't lead us all to being unproductive and thereby going from group polarisation to depolarisation.

Another heated subject was the marking of our community development programs. I sat back and enjoyed it. The real world was dawning us all, and everyone finally realized that it wasn't all roses when we leave our University. It sounds exciting and a great challenge!! However I'm glad that the final decision benefited everyone.

For many students, this mid-semester period provided opportunities to refine their conceptualisations of politics and also to enjoy their heightened awareness regarding demonstrations of power. From time to time, occasions arose for me as teacher to demonstrate how established rules and procedures could be used to progress an agenda and also how such a tactic could be thwarted by using the same rules and procedures.

One such instance occurred when, following weeks of general student discontent about the assessment system, I canvassed with the combined student group, the feasibility of altering the assessment for one aspect of the subject. By the final year of their degree, students know that subject assessment is established at the beginning of semester and cannot be changed at the whim of faculty. My purpose in canvassing a change of assessment with the students was to challenge them to assess whether or not I was serious and to calculate the power they possessed in relation to me as their teacher. I also expected them to act strategically, in their own interest, and argue against the proposal. Had they failed to do so, I fully intended to implement the change. They did debate successfully with me, and some students like Allan reflected further on how power might be used for other purposes.

Allan Week 6

Tracey today talked in the forum about how each group was going to be marked, saying that we could be scaled and that one group could end up failing. I disagreed totally with this idea, but then thought that Tracey was just having a go at us, trying to make us think, and was opting for us to get our brains into gear to argue the point. Through this, we became aware of looking at all the points, and ways in which we could effectively argue these points across. Everything was going quite well, we were thinking in 'committee' terms, and Tracey had prompted us to think - until the threat came of going to the student council. This totally destroyed the

atmosphere, and became very apparent that we were grudging against one person.

I found that threats and using power are not a good way of reaching a decision, as it does not allow the committee members to use our own credit rating to reach a conclusion. Tracey explained to us that threats would get us nowhere, especially here, and tension would form destroying the whole effect of arguing for a point. It also does not allow the group to reach a conclusion that is most appropriate for the target group, as an idea that is bad can just be put into play by using power.

Week eleven was a time when students who had been grappling with questions around politics and dominance within groups, began to understand the powerful effects of competition and the pressure to perform well. Letitia had been concerned at the dominance of male students and, in the quote below, she shares her political insights about changes occurring within a few weeks, and also the factors influencing the formation of new coalitions in the group.

Letitia Week 11

At this meeting (as stated earlier), I felt that there were certain members excluded from what I would refer to as the inner group. This inner group appeared to be the quieter people who had done the majority of the collection and collation of the material which was to be used in the presentation.

Most of the men appeared to be on the fringe unless they were friendly with a particular girl who was part of the 'in group'. One particular man, who, in the early weeks was finding it difficult to gain support for his ideas and who showed a certain degree of forcefulness, seemed to have either withdrawn from the group or been effectively excluded.

Three of the participants, including myself, who had been absent from the meetings for a particular reason, were drawn together. This seems to occur when people have some experience in common (absenteeism). Because of our lack of involvement over the preceding weeks we were also on the fringe.

Coalitions had definitely formed during my absence. I feel that the coalitions were formulated on the basis of shared attitudes, beliefs and values and not on the basis of mutual membership of a particular subcommittee.

Towards the end of the simulation students were learning how to analyse situations with political potential. In essence they learned to 'read' the behaviours of their colleagues and to consider what they were observing in relation to the potential effects of these behaviours. For instance, Beth found in Week nine that she was able to interpret the 'body language' of her colleagues.

Beth Week 9

Once again I'm sitting down after the main committee meeting, trying to sort out my thoughts. A couple of times I sat back and just watched the group. It was interesting to see the body language which was being carried out. One

person was making a proposal directing it at the person it was meant for. She did not make any eye contact at all. She clearly was not happy at the proposal or maybe she did not understand it fully. It is still clear that there are certain dominant people who still jump to second proposals.

By Week nine, most students had experienced political strategies within the committees and now had an opportunity to reflect on their experiences. Mairi concluded at this time that in the politics of committees, very little seemed to be fair.

Mairi Week 9

Throughout the meeting I sat back and attempted to analyse the 'goings on' of the committee. What I established is that from time to time I haven't been cunning enough in the meetings. On several occasions my ideas have been taken by others and proposed and accepted, therefore someone else was taking credit for my ideas! I don't believe in this! I feel one should be recognised for what one does. There have been plenty of opportunities I could have done the same to others. However, I attempted to bring it to their attention to propose it. I feel as though anyone reading this would think how highly does she think of herself! But no! I just believe in fair play. What I am leaning from this subject is that fair play doesn't always exist! Often it's just you playing fair.

The experience of having power over others was something that encouraged many students to reflect on their own responses to authority and control. Travis was an outgoing and articulate student who tried to operate as an ethical leader. But he soon realized through his leadership experiences in committee, that there was something about power that was quite subversive.

Travis Week 7

Yes, that's right I chaired today and what an experience. It was last meeting when I was nominated. I got some information regarding the process of a meeting which was helpful till the meeting started, after that it was decisions, decisions and arguments. Initially my plan of attack was to be cool, calm and collected and to sustain coherent discussions, democratic leadership and not to bias anyone, but reality set in quick and I needed to get a tight grip on the meeting.

As leader I had a lot of power as I was able to acknowledge people who I wanted to let speak, and those who frustrated me, well, avoided. I noticed that I purposely avoided Beth and Sheryl but could not avoid it for very much longer, as Tracey motioned to me that they had been waiting.

The reason why I did this is because, having the authority of control in the meeting allowed me to direct the meeting in the direction that I wanted to see it going. What I didn't want to see was a meeting taken over by individuals who up to now had virtually been given the run of the mill, and as recognised by other members, has not been tolerated very well.

I felt it necessary to allow those individuals who don't really say much, to give them the opportunity, by asking them their views on the situation. On the other hand I didn't acknowledge Mairi a great deal because I didn't want people to think that I was favouring her and not acknowledging the rest of

the group. Whatever strategy I attempted to implement, there would be individuals who would miss out. I know that consensus takes time, but if we're to achieve acceptance and enhance commitment to the presentation, we need to use our time constructively...

The power of authority was one which I felt comfortable with and one which I hated. Having control allowed me direct the meeting in my direction, or more specifically in the direction that the would best benefit the [committee]. It allowed me to control the discussion of the meeting and also who was talking. I felt that I took advantage of my authority by not acknowledging some individuals but on the other hand I ignored some individuals because of fear of bias. I can now understand why power is not always a good thing because in the wrong hands it can be abused and used for purposes that would not be in the best interests of individuals...

Once they had grown accustomed to the intricacies of committee procedure, the opportunity to experience power was welcomed by most students. As they realized that they needed to be strong individual participants if their team was to be productive, students began to think more critically about the group's political dynamics and the shifts that were occurring in relation to power.

Toward the end of the simulation, entries about power and politics were focused on how people performed and the level of comfort they experienced when behaving in political ways. Beth's astute observation of political behaviour enabled her to see that the exercise of power need not be accompanied by loud or disruptive behaviour.

Beth Week 11

Today's committee meeting was not well controlled and chaired... It was the group who controlled who was going to say what when... There are still certain people who jump in before the person has finished or straight after to second the motion. I noted that one person in particular felt tense because whilst she was talking, people butted in. Joy dealt with this by stopping what she was saying and sitting very still and quiet. In this circumstance it was effective and the student who butted in became quiet and Joy continued. This power play would not have been effective had the person not felt any guilt about butting in.

By providing students with opportunities to experience power in all of its forms, at the same time holding them accountable for any use they may make of their power, they developed their capacity to take on responsibility. Part of that responsibility was to manage conflict and tension within their committees while maintaining an effective level of work and team effort. By the end of the simulation most students realised, just as Beth indicates in the quote above, that just because someone is loud and aggressive does not mean that they possess power and influence. In fact, most students realized that domineering behaviours were more an indication of someone who feels inadequate about their own ability and capacity to influence, than an indication that

they may be able to direct and manage change in a competitive and complex environment.

In the sections that follow, evidence is presented to illustrate how students used their understanding of power in order to establish their own personal power base and that of their group. In the last section emphasis is given to ways in which individuals and groups used their power to take strategic action in support of their goals.

Building a power base

The concept of power, in its many forms, triggered considerable interest and energetic activity among students who participated in the simulation. Because of the constraints inherent in committee structures and rules, students discovered that in order to work together with others whom they may not know well socially or professionally, they needed to behave in ways that could enhance their personal and subgroup profile to increase their base of power. Most students developed an increasing awareness that their community presentation, an important aspect to planning and implementing the goal of the project team, depended on the extent to which they could influence others to give assistance. The success of the simulation depended on the development of skills in power building strategies that could be used by students to fulfil personal political ambitions as well as enabling their groups to secure resources and to be acknowledged for their efforts.

Team approaches to any complex project require members of a group to adopt collaborative behaviours that make it possible to build successful work relationships. Porter-O'Grady and Wilson (1995) claim that without team-based behaviours and approaches the relationships necessary to sustain a group's orientation and linkages internally and with other groups, simply cannot grow. A crucial aspect of the simulation for me therefore, was to consider ways to prompt the development of group cohesion so that students could learn to build long-term professional relationships that would advantage them as graduates within the health care system.

From the first committee meeting students realized how much could be gained politically by being powerful enough to influence the agenda for the project. This included arguing for the topic, or the way the topic could be presented to the target group, and also decisions about who was to head up certain work groups and the membership of those groups. The processes used by students to establish their base of power, were abhorred by some students, watched carefully by a few, and entered

into with enthusiasm by most. Ken was one of the few who preferred to watch during the first week.

Ken Week 1

There seemed to be a power play going on as each one or group tested the other. There seems to be a play for dominance. Everyone set the agenda, a natural competitive response I suppose. From this I was able to ascertain those members that were very assertive to those that were almost resistant to debate.

Audrey was aware of the political movements that were occurring, and also of the generally accepted rules of political debate that did not seem to be adhered to by some of her colleagues. She realized early that the next few weeks would be stressful. She perceived herself as already powerful although she knew that others in her group held similar perceptions of themselves.

Audrey Week 1

Talk about being thrown in at the 'deep end'. This meeting was messy. The cursory introduction to meeting procedures through lectures and handbook material showed in the group dynamics after degenerating into a point scoring exercise.

I found myself (as well as other members) polarising constantly. Loyalties and support were switching by the minute. The reason for this ongoing polarisation I think is because a lot of us have never talked before (I mean no more than at an acquaintance level). In the first twenty minutes it seemed there was an undercurrent in each individual manifesting itself upon the group. This was one of an individual attempting to assert itself as a powerful group member. I found this especially in myself, I realized this when I found I was nominating and seconding everything.

Discussion on our topic also proved an interesting experience. Proposal technique was crap as group members put uncompromising proposals for the topic. Some reasonable, some not so reasonable, and some ridiculous ideas were put forward. After taking a stint in a hot house of emotion the group decided to let the target group decide. Personally, I feel as an individual; and as a group, that stress is to follow. It does seem all a little pointless, except for the power merchants who succeed in domination or suppression of the humble

With a week to reflect on their group's first meeting, students were trying to understand what had caused the furore during their meetings as they each tried to strengthen their power base. Binny thought that responsibility for resolving some of the conflict that had arisen might lay with particular individuals. She saw an opportunity to establish herself in the influential role of mediator.

Binny Week 2

There was a definite chill in the air during the third meeting but it had nothing to do with the weather, unfortunately. There has been a lot of things said amongst various group members about the disastrous events of last

week's meeting, and morale and enthusiasm for the project is running low. The general feel of the meeting was one of simmering anger and hostility, and at one point tempers flared and heated discussion ensued over a trivial technicality in meeting procedure.

Bitching and gossip about the individuals who instigated the conflict at last week's meeting, has been going on all week but nothing constructive has been put forward to assist in finding a resolution to the problem, and the individuals concerned have not been confronted with the rest of the committee's gripes about their behaviour. As a result, the offending individuals are possibly blissfully unaware that they have done anything wrong, although they would have to be blind, deaf and dumb to remain ignorant of the group's displeasure with them, such is the level of ostracism at the moment. Personally, I'm trying to stay detached from the emotional aspect of this issue. Regardless of how I feel about them as people, I'm attempting to be a mediator between the two groups, play down the drama, defuse the emotions and bring back some harmony to the situation.

Interestingly, Trisha attended the same meeting as Binny but her perceptions of the committee interactions were quite different. Where Binny perceived a 'chill in the air', Trisha thought the meeting had been a well controlled place where she could learn something. In fact Trisha, at that meeting, could see that by producing high standard work, she could avoid overt competition for points to establish her credibility.

Trisha Week 2

The meeting for our group was extremely productive today...

Although normal committee meetings are still slightly indistinct in my mind, I walked away feeling as though I have learnt something, especially from Craig, who in my mind depicted the true meaning of a committee meeting and was able to convey control and direction within the group. I am now able to concentrate on working with the group to produce the highest standard in our community project, not just 'score points' with irrelevant comments that are not conducive to our topic. I believe that this was the general feeling from all members of our committee as there was a substantial decline in vindictive comments being made, and an increase in productive discussion.

The different perceptions by Binny and Trisha of the same event are interesting in terms of what may have been motivating them. Both were eager to find a base of power that would provide opportunities to gain marks, but each had found a means of doing this without entering into direct competition with other students, or adopting a foreign way of behaving. Binny tried to set herself up as an impartial mediator while Trisha distanced herself from point-scoring in meetings by concentrating on producing good work at her own pace.

Mona, who was so keen to learn about politics and how committees worked found problems with almost every aspect of the group and its efforts. She could see however

that if she wanted to become a powerful person within the group she would need to lobby for support.

Mona Week 2

Well what a bun fight the meeting turned out to be! The minutes seemed to take forever to get through and altogether were too involved. If last week's secretary could have condensed the minutes or even put them into point form we could have got through them in 5 minutes instead of 30 minutes.

As for the rest of the meeting the chairperson did not take a firm enough stand and control the committee or the discussions. There seemed to be a number of motions put to the floor without the chair calling for a vote. Were these motions carried or lost? It will be interesting to read next weeks minutes. It became quite obvious early on that a strong chair person was needed to hold a productive meeting. This meeting was far from productive and in fact most people left feeling frustrated and cheesed off!

It would seem if I wish to have some more input into the planning of this day, I will have to lobby Committee members prior to the next meeting to gather support for any ideas I might have.

Maxine, who had been one of the more reticent students, was feeling comfortable by Week ten, having secured a productive role in the committee and exerting her preferred style of leadership without being abrasive. She was quite aware of the changes occurring as a result of politics in her group but had decided that she was not interested in direct competition for the main leadership roles. Having made this decision, the task of maintaining her power base as 'worker' and 'helper' entailed remaining involved with the committee in ways that preserved her committee profile.

Maxine Week 10

The ball is beginning to roll, the committee is starting to see the development of our presentation. There are dominant members of our group, who have taken it upon themselves to keep this project running at a high standard. Other members of the group seem to have no objection to this and have assumed the role of the 'workers', I feel I will function most effectively as a 'worker' as I do not possess the organisation or managerial skills or the time or motivation required to lead our committee to presenting a functional presentation... Discovering this has allowed me to find my functional notch within this committee. As a member of the team, I will be representing our committee and it will be important for me to maintain a good understanding of the aims and progress of our presentation. I will also make myself available to any of the subcommittees, if they need a hand.

Power building strategies commenced in most groups as early as Week two of semester. Students believed that they needed to exert influence in order to get their ideas heard and accepted by the group and, to achieve these goals, they needed the support of colleagues. Power building strategies therefore included the formation of strategic alliances with other students, becoming more assertive and articulate in order to monopolise the agenda and to lobby people like tutors, who were generally

perceived to have power and influence despite my efforts to have tutors take an advisory role. Some students, like Mona, also realized that factions could also prevent committees from working well.

Mona Week 7

Despite our lack of resources and time I think we have done extremely well. I think everyone in our group is feeling good about how far we have come and although there was some definite factions initially (including myself and Hester) these don't seem to have created any real problems. I can see however in some instances, and depending on the objectives of any committee, these warring factions could quite easily make a committee unworkable.

Setting up alliances and factions often entailed emotional pressure being exerted on some students to support proposals put forward by other students. Many different tactics were tried including calling upon friendship as a basis of support for their resolutions or political strategies. Even the quieter members of the group were viewed as recruits in the factional splitting that occurred. Kerlyn, for instance, knew some of her colleagues were trying to manipulate her, but she was determined not to give into pressure.

Kerlyn Week 4

I believe I am in a very awkward position in this subcommittee. As I am one of the quieter people in the group, other members constantly try to coerce me into their way of thinking. However, I am not naive. I will not let them force me into supporting anything I don't believe in. By the same token though, I do feel at times like the meat in the sandwich. I can not help but feeling if others attended our subcommittee meetings, there would not be the same pressure placed upon me.

Ken was well aware of the shifts in political influence that were occurring within his committee as alliances and powerful cliques were formed. He and other 'older students' formed their own faction, convinced that they could provide leadership to a committee that, in Ken's opinion, was floundering. In the quote below, Ken also considers several other ways of increasing his power base within the committee.

Ken Week 2

The second meeting was more constructive in the sense that we began to focus more seriously on the presentation topic and its appropriateness. This was due to the fact that most of us were becoming worried about whether this task could be achieved in the time frame given. A new topic was introduced ...and there was a greater consensus on the topic. This was arrived at I suspect due to some shifts in groups aligning themselves with others. This started to become evident after some worrying signs of disharmony among the majority of members to one group in particular. Apart from the vigorous lobbying and some heated displays, this problem of pointscoreing was emerging again with groups protecting each other on the correct procedure of proposing and seconding.

While I did not yet fully understand how this was to be carried out, I made sure that this time I was firm in my interruptions when it looked like things were getting out of hand. On some occasions I had to become quite adamant and demonstrate that this behaviour was not serving a purpose.

It became evident to me that this aspect of committee functioning was symptomatic of a dysfunctional committee and was determined to ensure that whoever was chairperson the next time, I would tell them to be firm from the outset, let the other members of the group know that any misbehaviour will not be tolerated and that they should study the correct procedures of how to function within a committee. We've got to start functioning as a group or we won't get this project completed.

Some of us got together after the meeting to discuss the problems we were having. Interestingly all of us were the older members of the group. It soon became clear that we shared the same ideas on how the group should function to achieve its goals and we started to identify areas, the most important disruptive elements in the group that were impeding the process.

Controlling the agenda required the wielding of power and the most ready source of power for students in committees was through the positional authority that came with being elected to chair a meeting. Claudia participated enthusiastically as a committee member however the potential for power and control through being chairperson was not lost upon her.

Claudia Week 3

Today was great. I loved being the chairman. I had power and it was fun. Suddenly I had a little control over the group and I felt this was my chance to move things on a bit. The forum on Monday helps too! I tried to apply the rules of discussing a motion. For example, allowing people to speak once for or against a motion etc. I must admit I enjoyed telling Bert he was out of order. I think/hope I went Okay and didn't lose too many friends being bossy.

It was very difficult as chairman to restrain myself from making comment and entering the debate on a motion because I'm a person who needs to say what I feel and think. To help things move on a little faster I tried to stop general chat which was hindering progress. I think we achieved things today... We have a lot of strong personalities in our group, I'd say I was one of them, sometimes I see a lot of stubbornness in the group (myself included). I hope this doesn't get in the way of our doing a good presentation.

Contributions to the project were useful as a strategy for anyone wishing to build a power base within the committee. Work performed by individuals and subgroups was able to be presented to the committee and recorded in the minutes along with the names of the people involved. By Week three of semester several students had realized that this was a far more productive strategy than blatant competition as a committee member who relied on proposing and seconding motions to build their political profile. Unfortunately, because the work had been already allocated to

particular people and subgroups, an element of territorial defensiveness was beginning to emerge.

Trisha Week 3

Our meeting today was fairly productive although some members of the group seem to revert back to childish behaviours, when they don't get their own way. Most people agreed that the outline we presented was a good way to convey our information to the target group. However, one subcommittee felt put out, and said that we were trying to take over their job. They had a whinge, out of order was called and Craig called a point of order to stop more bitchy vindictiveness being thrown into the meeting. The heat simmered down after that. However, all this wasted valuable time that could have been used productively to keep the group moving forward. Greater control was needed during this meeting, however, it was totally out of control and very little could be done. Next time it happens, they are going to have to be ejected from the meeting, as their actions prevent the group from progressing and it's a waste of valuable time, something we are running out of quickly.

Whether the impetus for subcommittee roles to become less distinct was linked to an increased student awareness of being able to gain marks for having work acknowledged, or whether it was that certain types of work were more attractive than that allocated to their subcommittee, it is difficult to say. However in most committees there were instances of what could only be described as 'turf wars' where incursions by some students onto work 'territory' allocated through committee decision to other students, were earnestly resisted. As the teacher of this subject, I found the phenomenon of students competing for involvement and opportunities to do more work than each other, a fascinating experience. Estelle however, found the experience disappointing.

Estelle Week 5

Every subcommittee was keen to become involved in the presentation. Because of this enthusiasm, committee roles were being mixed up and committees were becoming angry and upset... and as far the [first] subcommittee was concerned, the [second] subcommittee had invaded their territory, and they were quite upset about it. The [first] committee did not mean to cause trouble within the group, for they were only trying to obtain information, but the [second] committee did not see it that way and in this meeting they asked for clarification of roles and functions of each subcommittee... The meeting was not successful as things had become strained and individual committee members had gone off and obtained information and resources without telling the other subcommittee members.

Having been exposed to displays of power such as blatant manipulation of the rules by most of the students during the first few weeks, students soon began to observe the more subtle aspects of how some people were acquiring power. They built upon their skills of strategic analysis and watched for opportunities to increase their power base

as events unfolded. Students who had been studying together for over two years were beginning to notice each other in terms of how they responded to situations and to judge the efficacy of these responses in relation to their personal and group agendas. They were also becoming more aware of their own political motivations and actions.

For some students greater self-awareness came as a surprise. For instance, when Don was elected to chair the committee the experience heightened his awareness of the differences between his usual charismatic approach to dealing with other people, and the approaches taken by other students. He began to feel less 'passive' and could relate the experience he was gaining through the simulation, to other facets of his life.

Don Week 4

I was chairperson yesterday. I didn't like it one bit. I wish I had paid more attention to your lecture, Tracey. I felt like I wasn't in control of the meeting. I tried to go into the meeting and control it by my natural self-confidence and power. Well, that didn't work, did it. It really reinforced who was controlling the power of the group. Emmett, Velma and Hyacinth. Hyacinth not so much, but Emmett and Velma, heaps. I think this is why Emmett is so anti Velma. He sees her as a threat, which she is. I don't know if it is conscious or not, but you can see the power struggle!!!

You will be pleased to hear that I'm starting to think about the [community social clubs] I'm in. I feel I'm not a passive member anymore. I'm starting to see the power structures within the clubs and if I ever had to, I reckon I could influence these people. It's scary though.

In many of the groups competition for dominance abated within a few weeks to the extent that most students soon realized that they needed to work together if they were to succeed at their project. In the journals, reflections with a political or power emphasis remained focused on ways in which one could build up a base of power and also observe any shifts of power within the groups. According to Leigh, there seemed to be less tension between trying to assert within the group and the need to work harmoniously together.

Leigh Week 4

I can see how big business men have big egos. It's great to have all that power. I can also understand how these big egos must get in the way of doing good work, and how it might lead to power struggles etc. Actually you can see sometimes that even though none of us in our committee have any high flying positions of power, our egos still sometimes get in the way. No one likes to be corrected, interrupted, told that their idea is not useful or that their work is not good etc. This has led to a couple of power struggles but luckily nothing too major. I think the key is to try and act grown up and reasonable about it. If the group does not like your idea you just have to think, 'Well there are probably good reasons why this is not a good idea or they wouldn't be rejecting it. You just have to carry on and work through it.' I think this is what happened to us today. We realized that problems can

occur but by starting again you can overcome it. If you don't turn yourselves around, the whole thing will just fall apart. I enjoyed being secretary and really playing an active role today. The more you contribute, the better you feel.

Interest in ways to build up one's power base remained a popular topic of most mid-semester journal entries, however there was also a strong interest in observing the ways in which other students might be regarded as abusing that power. Students who opted for rowdiness as a base of power were a source of concern, but most students resisted the option of placing greater power in the hands of the few who seemed to like taking positions of authority. Robert identified a quandary, in that those who chair meetings need to have power to control the group, but giving some people this power risks rendering the group vulnerable to abuse by the chairperson.

Robert Week 8

As soon as you seem to be on track, directions change and so do people. The meeting was once again littered with arguments and directionless talk. The overall committee aims and objectives are however being met by individual work more than a group effort... There does seem to be a call for the chairperson to have more control on the group. But this just enhances the problem by giving that person a 'power rush' and them favoring close friends when it comes to decision making.

Abuse of power by the chairperson was indeed a problem yet many students apparently seemed to subscribe to the view that domination by a chairperson was expected as part of the role. In the earlier part of the simulation positions of power were grasped by confident students and their behaviour tended to set the parameters of the various leadership roles. As other students developed confidence, many began to reflect how they came to be following colleagues who had secured power but who no longer inspired them. With a flourish of wit, Sandra encapsulated a situation that followed a defeat earlier in semester when her supporters had been outnumbered in an election. She resorted to humour in her journal to reaffirm her own power base as leader of the smaller subcommittee.

Sandra Week 9

The alpha female (AF) has quite taken over at this stage. All the work the group has been finished but we are still waiting on some sponsors. The group is really divided somewhat. The AF has decided on how the day is to be presented with no consultation to the group - as was heard - we came, we sat, we were told. This is the group's fault because we have let her take over. The group was looking for some direction and being the person that she is, she sort of gave it. But now I'm wondering why everyone is complaining about the leadership of one person when I watched the group let her do it. Maybe it's jealousy because they didn't have the strength to do it. I don't let her tell me what to do or how to run my subcommittee.

Whether the articulate few seized power or took it up because no one else wanted it, was something that worried Tina as the simulation passed its mid-point. She was concerned that by allowing more assertive people to establish their dominance, those who were now unhappy with the outcome needed to realize how they had actually contributed to the situation rather than simply being dissatisfied.

Tina Week 8

The meetings are becoming far more structured and the committee is functioning to its full extent. At the first couple of meetings everyone, I feel, sat back and looked up to those handful of assertive people who maybe were given a little too much power in respect to other members who were keen to second a motion and thus feel they were part of an important decision. This caused huge dilemmas not only in the fact that the assertive people took over, but everyone agreed and nobody disagreed. This then led to members being dissatisfied once the meeting closed...

Because election to be chairperson entailed lobbying and building factional support some students perceived that something was owed to colleagues who had helped them to be elected. Being the chairperson also provided particular students with the power to enact certain ideas that had not been able to succeed in other ways. While many students took these opportunities when chairing their meetings, those who were not chairing, like Eleanor in the quote below, were far from impressed by what they perceived to be the misuse of power to enforce a dominant ideology or strategy.

Eleanor Week 8

The chairperson used the power of the chair to implement her own ideas to the fullest and advocate the role of her own subcommittee. The power was misused grossly, as most of the talking was done by the chairperson and discussion was centred around their own subcommittee's functioning. The rest of the subcommittees had limited input into this meeting and were probably glad that it finished early.

Within the last month of the simulation most students reached a level of confidence where they articulated their perceptions that they were not being treated fairly. Using the information and skills gained from lectures and readings they were able to work out ways of participating more effectively in the groups so that their work was formally acknowledged, and their voices heard in the enthusiastic debates that remained a feature of most committee groups and forums. For instance, Pamela was unhappy about the way some students continually dominated those who were less confident. Her own base of power resided in taking up issues of justice and equity even though as she admits, many voices were still not able to be heard.

Pamela Week 9

Ideas flowed well today, but there was still a lot of conflict and overlapping despite my proposal. I have noticed a lot of people's voices are not being

heard because there are only certain people who are continually bombarding the meeting with their ideas not allowing others to speak their mind. 'Every human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the culture of silence is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others.' [Freire, 1972, p12]. However, things are working well.

Because the simulation was set up to encourage assertiveness moderated by justice and equity, it was predictable that students who had once been 'quiet' would begin to assert within their groups. It was anticipated also that those students who had previously not had to contend with so much competition, would find they needed to put in extra effort if they wanted to maintain any political edge they had in the past over the quieter students. Cydne reflected on the effort being made by one of her articulate colleagues and realized that more students needed to speak up to improve the discussion.

Cydne Week 3

Some observations about today's meeting were that Eloise tended to monopolise the motions. It seemed she was trying to get some points for her collective total which is an advantage for her but meant that only her point of view was being put across and discussed. Therefore it could be said she dominated the meeting and there is obviously a need for other group members to speak up and put forward their feelings so we have a wide range of discussion.

Many students who expressed concern about the way the assessment encouraged assertive behaviours, and the impact this might have on quieter students. Claire's entry in Week five of the simulation captured what worried most of the students. She was concerned about the hostility arising from arguments over 'territorial boundaries' as well as the difficulties faced by assertive students when confronted with the realization that some of their colleagues did not seem to have the skill or motivation to express their views in the meetings and therefore appeared inept.

Claire Week 5

There was argument and confusion this week over what subgroups have what jobs and responsibilities. Some students felt others were doing their job. There was hostility shown between some students... I think the reason students felt threatened by others was the way our meetings are being marked. All students want to be mentioned in the minutes and all students want to mention what they have achieved in the previous week. A clear picture of the students with dominating and outgoing personalities is being made. I don't think it's wrong to have a personality like this, in fact I have one. But I'm just worried, when will the quieter students get a say, or will they even try?

Claire's disquiet about her quieter colleagues were shared by many other students who raised with me their concerns and dilemmas about whether they should protect these

colleagues by reducing their own power base or enhancing that of quieter students. Others asked me if they should take full advantage of some students being less able to compete with them, thus consolidating their own political advantage. In all of these discussions and consultations with students I urged them to consider the many powerful alternatives to aggressive confrontation that are available to politically astute people who wish to succeed without necessarily causing others to fail.

The gentle art of impression management

Contemporary notions of personal power within complex organisations usually carry with them expectations that a powerful person will be able to achieve whatever he or she wants, even against opposition from those who do not support the same goals. In a way, the impression one imparts contributes to the belief in others that one either has, or does not have, a personal base of power at their disposal. Stereotypically, a powerful person conveys an air of competence, authority or influence and is therefore may be able to convince others to support mutual objectives. While such stereotypes of powerful people abound, generating an impression about oneself that inspires confidence in others is difficult, however the benefits of being able to do so include receiving assistance and support from other like-minded people or those who perceive some advantage in the arrangement.

Various theories of power and politics within the context of organisational behaviours were examined within the subject content of Community Development Nursing, along with the sources of power and a range of political strategies used to acquire or redistribute power. Students had opportunities to analyse a range of situations in terms of the power people actually possessed and many became aware of those who merely demonstrate behaviours similar to the way a powerful person might act. On several occasions and with different cohorts of students, I encouraged them to analyse me in terms of any power I might possess and also the power they as individuals and as a group might have. These forum discussions were usually lively and good-natured, however each time following these sessions, I noticed increased demonstrations of collegiality from students and far less deference although, I have to say, deference was never a strong characteristic of students' behaviours.

During the earlier years of undergraduate studies students had learned to behave in certain ways in the presence of faculty who would be assessing their work. In the simulation the assessment was based on group work, individual recognition in the committee minutes, and their reflective journals. There was little for students to gain by

trying to impress the tutor however, because of their past experiences with faculty, many students at the beginning of the simulation still tried to portray an impression of compliance. Hannah was one of the first students to reflect on her observation that some colleagues self-censored their comments in the presence of a tutor yet, when the team met unsupervised they were more open about their views.

Hannah Week 2

This extraordinary meeting went much smoother than our past meetings which we all seemed to notice. It was discussed and as a group we find that conducting a meeting without a tutor is more relaxed and more productive. In my opinion, I think this is the reason because the group members don't feel as though they have to perform and say all the things they think the tutor would like to hear them say. Without the presence of a tutor, they feel as though they can say what they really want to say.

Among colleagues, students also worked at building their own political profile and that of their groups. Students were aware that not only did they need to be skilful on a number of levels, it was also important to create a personal impression that inspired confidence among their peers. They realized also that it was politically wise when competing with other groups, to appear cohesive and committed to their project.

With so much competitive self-interest occurring within each committee, achieving group cohesion and commitment was difficult although within a few weeks of starting the simulation some students began to insist on more orderly behaviour in order to sustain an appearance of cohesion. Trisha for instance, had been very competitive in 'point scoring', but she now regarded that type of behaviour as demeaning and welcomed the efforts of her colleagues to work cohesively.

Trisha Week 4

Today's meeting was rather sedate compared to last weeks. We walked out of the meeting with a sense of accomplishment and progress... The running of committee meetings is finally down to a fine art, and less irrelevant comments are made. I feel all members are concentrating less on 'scoring points' and more on the accomplishment of the task at hand. Our subcommittee is progressing well, as we are compiling information on the way we are going to present our topic, without a demeaning, belittling manner... Overall, I believe our committee is progressing out of sight. More in depth thought and analysis is being put into our meetings and extraordinary meetings, giving a natural progression into our topic.

The problem of how to establish the sort of impression that would capture the attention of others in their committee, was something that worried many students. The rowdy behaviour of colleagues, all trying to be heard above the din was too much for Clarice who was personally affronted by their dismissal of her ideas. She had tried to be

outspoken but she and some of the other students had failed to be heard above the melee.

Clarice Week 3

I feel like as though no-one is taking any more notice of what I am saying. It's only our 3rd meeting, but I expected a little bit more cooperation and understanding. Many of the members including myself have been calling out ideas and it has become a bit of a mess and confusion... There were various issues being discussed amongst the members at the wrong time, this caused some frustration within the group. Too many people were talking and not concentrating, a lot of train of thought was broken. And there were too many people proposing and seconding motions just for the sake of gaining a few extra bonus points, yelling out and not letting each individual finish what they were saying was a major problem.

Similarly, Sheryl found the competitive environment daunting but she was at a further disadvantage by trying to maintain an image of being polite within committee meetings when most of her colleagues seemed to be so loud that she could not make herself heard. She realized that something needed to change for her to be able to work constructively with people who certainly had not created a positive impression by the fourth week of the simulation.

Sheryl Week 4

I'm not looking forward to the next meetings because it's full of competition and point scoring. Besides which it's very difficult to remain polite when you're frustrated and can't be heard. I need to urgently acquire optimism and pull together with the group to ensure that what ever we do is successful. Will be interesting to see how this turns out.

The importance within the groups of creating an impression of being capable, was directly related to being able to garner enough support to succeed at an election bid. Many students clung to the principles of equity and justice, resisting becoming involved with the more political aspects of 'working the room' in order to attract support. Some students complained that the opportunity was 'never given to them' to show what they were capable of doing. In her quote below, Pamela reflected on how she had tried to overcome political limitations arising from the impression other students had of her abilities and the value of her contributions to the committee.

Pamela Week 9

In today's meeting there was a lot of repetition. The same group of people were bombarding the discussion and being very picky on small inadequacies just to have their name on reports... I've made many attempts to participate. I even allocated myself to the management team. However, the management seats are always put to vote. Not everybody is given a fair go. I wanted to be chairman but, with popularity and biased viewpoints, I was outvoted. I felt very upset by not being given the chance to see what I could do. How is a person supposed to express themselves

when the opportunity is never given to them. Assumptions are made about people without knowing the person... The management team is always elected by vote and others are left out. Many times people on the management seats have already been on the team thus not giving others the opportunity or the points.

Some students thought about the impression they communicated in a group of people whose main interest was to find an idea and then to flesh it out through debate. Maxine grappled with the concept of communicating in a way that allowed her to assert her ideas without undermining the impression she had of herself of not upsetting others.

Maxine Week 10

During these committee meetings I am gaining considerable skills involved in communication; how to assert yourself, without being perceived as attacking one personally. Also how important it is to express your ideas clearly and concisely, so you are understood and your ideas are interpreted correctly, resulting in effective and relevant debate regarding your idea.

As the groups settled into work associated with the projects, students formed opinions about who was competent or powerful and who was simply disruptive. All of these judgements were based on the impressions they had gathered about other students who had demonstrated their level of competence in achieving the tasks required. For some who had created an impression of being quiet people, like Mariah, the value of clinging to such an image diminished as they realized the waste of time caused by colleagues who gave the impression of dominating the committee.

Mariah Week 5

This meeting started out all right but the chairperson lost control of the committee. It made me realize that a powerful chairperson is essential for an efficient meeting. She let the arguing fly back and forth and we got nowhere fast. Again, it was all very tense and the different subcommittees were arguing about overstepping roles... As far as bad feelings went, I think we all hit rock bottom. Things only have to get better.

Not a great deal got accomplished and we ended up running out of time. The things we needed to discuss were forgotten and the whole hour seemed a waste of time. I think most of the group felt the same way as we discussed it when it was over. We all had feelings of dread as we wondered how on earth will it all come together. It is very difficult for a meeting to be under control it seems, as there are several more dominant members of the group who absolutely must be heard - all at the same second.

Preconceived impressions of colleagues were sometimes found to be incomplete or even inaccurate when students seized opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. Some students reflected in their journals on the way others approached various challenges within the simulation. For instance, most students who had opted to be the first chairperson, or who had been elected to chair during the first two weeks, had felt

very nervous about taking on these very public roles. Those who did not want to be among the first to lead were impressed by the daring and courage displayed by their colleagues. Sometimes, impressions of competence were not born out as some students struggled with certain roles. For example, Allanah describes in the quote below, her surprise when Julia appeared to be less confident, leading to Allanah's revision of the impression she had previously formed about her colleague's ability.

Allanah Week 2

During the forum, Julia and myself had to get up and discuss the groups progress. As soon as Tracey mentioned this I could feel myself beginning to shake, the idea of talking in front of the whole group was nerve racking. Thankfully, Julia did all the talking, however, I felt guilty for not helping out more when I realized that Julia was just as nervous. This is something I'd never considered before as Julia has always appeared to be very confident and nothing ever seems to phase her... and I have always envied and admired her.

Previously held impressions of colleagues and friends were often challenged as different roles and interactions occurred in the committee meetings and sometimes outside the meetings. Some students reflected on changes to the ways in which they had perceived their colleagues. It was a matter of considerable interest to students like Pearl when some students seemed to behave out of character when performing leadership roles within the committee,.

Pearl Week 6

Today's meeting was the most disorganized and chaotic gathering that we have had to date. It was disgusting, as close to the chairperson as I am on a personal level, I don't think that she is a very strong chairperson. In fact she appeared to be a very weak chair which is strange because she knows a lot about the proceedings of committee meetings. She always has something to say about whatever is being talked about and usually knows how to shut people up - today she didn't though. We wasted too much time... the whole meeting was most frustrating. It feels like we did not achieve much and now things may be going to be delayed by one week.

Generally speaking, students expected that those in the roles of chairperson and secretary, would portray a certain image. They had positional authority and were expected to use it fairly so that the business of the meeting could occur. Towards the end of the simulation, most students believed they had developed an understanding of the type of behaviour that would be expected of them as professionals in the paid workforce. Paula's comments were similar to those of many students who, at different stages of the simulation, expressed a belief that the impression one generates greatly affects the ability of any professional to do their work well.

Paula Week 10

Being chairperson at this meeting was not an easy task with many of the group displaying a lot of childishness and doing their best to disrupt the meeting. To be the chairperson one has to display an air of authority which is difficult when everyone is trying to argue over and around you. I do not have a very loud voice so people were a little surprised when it was raised. I don't know where these students were taught their manners and decorum but it certainly was not from the same rule book that I had to adhere to... When looking back at today's meeting I feel that a lot of students are going to have to pull their socks up and learn how to act in society with some reserve, decorum and professionalism but at the same time not dampening their enthusiasm.

Many students present at these meetings were aware of opportunities to establish their own credibility by participating in debate and to observing how others behaved under pressure. From time to time, students commented on the discomfort they felt when friends acted in a way that was both unfamiliar and unwelcome. Olga's comments below are typical of students' reactions against a colleague who attempted to demonstrate their authority.

Olga Week 5

The 'POWER' business came shining through in this meeting which was sickening... Those who are chairperson must use the authority they obtain from being in this position constructively instead of using it as a power rush... The Chairperson today did run a rather effective meeting BUT I couldn't help but get frustrated and angry with her regarding the way she utilised her level of power. It felt as though she was throwing it about more than I deemed necessary. I understand the Chair must control the meeting but her attitude and demeanour was offensive.

Kerlyn took a moment in Week ten, to reflect on her earlier journal entries. She discovered that even though the experience had not turned out to be as much fun as she had originally expected, she had managed to revise the way she was perceived by her colleagues and had developed personal qualities that earned the respect of her group and attracted support for her views.

Keryln Week 10

Looking back on the entries which I made during the first weeks of this session when I was so much looking forward to meeting and getting to know these people, I know now that there are some very dominating personalities amongst our group. Luckily this has strengthened my own weak points. I have learnt to voice my opinions and be heard within the group. I am not a dominating person but I believe that various people within our group now do respect me and my ideas. This is a crucial time in the planning for presentation and I believe that we should all be working together, towards the same goals and I know that Debbie echoes my opinions on this matter.

Being able to convey an impression of competence at the weekly forums was also on the political agendas of most groups. Essentially, the forum content and format was driven by the students who placed pressure on themselves and their groups, to perform well and create an impression of professional competence. It was difficult for most students to stand up and speak on what their group had been doing and to discuss any issues arising from these activities. Those relying on colleagues to represent their views accurately and fairly in the forums considered ways to improve their image and Jean's reflections below typify the concerns about the political necessity of appearing competent, felt by a large number of students.

Jean Week 6

The forum meetings are really starting to hot up ever since everybody realized that the groups were competing against each other. The other groups really sound like they are going somewhere with their topics. I believe that our group is looking a little inadequate at the moment.

We are really going to have to discuss presentation for the forum in this week's meeting. An understanding of who will be presenting and what they should say appears to be lacking, resulting in a little more discussion on what should be said at the forum without giving too much information about our project away being required. A point to be brought up at the meeting.

It was in this context that teams which were managing well were able to display their achievements and appear competent and cohesive in front of the other groups. A number of students mentioned scaring the other groups as a desirable goal in forums. Some, like Bert, believed that 'psyching out' the competition projected a powerful image. Within a few weeks, presentations by committee chairs at the forums took on a quite unnecessary but popular overtone of competitiveness. Bert had no qualms about how his group could gain from the forums.

Bert Week 6

These Monday forums continue to be a real competition, each group trying to make themselves look better the next. It is all a bit of a 'psych out' session, everybody in the crowd starts to worry that maybe their group isn't going as well as they thought. I think it is part of human nature to try, and tell yourself you are going better than you really are. Apart from these sessions providing good motivation, these forums are good for stealing other people's ideas.

Monitoring the competition was certainly part of the forum presentations and most student groups used this information to improve their own project work. Wanda, for instance, thought their performance in the forums was be less impressive than she thought it could be and she was determined that they should do better.

Wanda Week 6

While listening to all of the groups making their reports at this week's forum, I thought that our group has made little progress compared to the others... Everything seems like the odds are against us at the moment. After seeing some of the other groups organisation, I feel stronger and more determined to be better than the other groups. You watch, our next forum report will scare the other groups. They will realize that we have done something productive.

Travis had committed himself early in the semester to this new approach to learning, and thought the value of the forums was not so much the availability of shared ideas, but rather it was an opportunity to gather impressions of other groups and their progress and to benchmark his own group's progress.

Travis Week 6

Today we had our forum, which was much more constructive and informative. I felt from observing the other groups that ours was much more organized than the rest. Discussion from individual groups brought about more ideas and issues which we seemed to have overlooked, such as we're not sure about the time allowed for each group or for the day; what facilities are available, number of students etc. The forum allows these issues to be identified and also an opportunity, I suppose to monitor our competition.

For poorly organized teams, the forum was a potential source of embarrassment. It was a commonly shared belief among the students that their chairperson would deliver an informative and professional presentation in front of all other students and project a positive team image. Ros's committee had been trying to negotiate with their community organisation to establish a suitable topic but as yet the group was divided on how to resolve the matter. When Larry shared these problems at the forum, his committee members were not impressed.

Ros Week 3

Had a forum today. God our group sounded stupid, all other groups have decided on their topics, have organized many subgroups and discussed the role of each. Some have even organized games and prizes for on the day. When Larry got up to give the talk on our groups progress, and said how we'd changed our topic, against the advice of the [community representative], everyone laughed, admittedly it was a joke.

Lillian expressed similar misgivings when her chairperson gave the impression of being unprepared for the forum presentation. She was embarrassed when she compared her group's presentation with that given by the other groups.

Lillian Week 5

I entered the theatre confident that the chairperson could pull it off satisfactorily. This was a naive presumption. Although the report given was not disgraceful, it was not in any competition with the other committees. Our chairperson was not properly prepared and flipped through the minutes

while he 'ummed' and 'ahhed'. Our committee would have appeared to the rest of the forum and Tracey, as being unprepared and unfruitful. I was embarrassed. Everyone did their report so well in comparison.

Desiree was also very critical of the performance of their chairperson and was worried about how disorganized her group looked to others.

Desiree Week 3

We look so disorganized in comparison to all the other groups, we don't even definitely have a topic for God's sake. The chairperson reported today in the forum that we had chosen our topic, yeah right! At this point the group is still divided as to our choice of topic!

As other students watched their colleagues present their reports, some were still keen to see that expectations of standards associated with the activity were met. Even for students whose own group presentations were given at an acceptable standard, there was an expectation that the forum presentations would be taken seriously and done well so that all students could benefit from the learning opportunity. Charmaine was far from impressed by the efforts of group leaders other than her own.

Charmaine Week 6

Today we held our second forum and overall I found it very disappointing. The reason why I found it disappointing, is due to the fact that the group leaders are not taking the forum seriously. They are not using the available time allocated to them and they are not getting their message across to the rest of us students.

Since our forum goes for one hour, each group has between seven and eight minutes to present their project. However, group leaders are not using this time, therefore they are not getting their message across, as the reports are often very brief. Another problem arising from these forums, is that some group leaders stand up, in front of the class unprepared. They tend to talk off the top of their heads, or from a scrap of paper that they scribbled on five minutes before the forum. This causes them to become unclear, as they are often unsure of what they are saying, and they are leaving very important points out, remembering the points and then adding them in throughout the talk. This makes their report very disorganized and unclear. Overall, I believe that our group leader did a good job at the forum. She was organized, spoke clearly and laterally and was confident in what she was saying. Therefore, I hope that the other groups took notice of how she presented, and they follow in her footsteps.

As the simulation progressed Charmaine's interest in how students presented in the forums was maintained. She enjoyed listening to the forum reports, but would have preferred that presenters take their roles more seriously. As far as she was concerned there were certain standards to be met if one was to appear professional, but some students seemed to be less worried than Charmaine about the impression they were making on others.

Charmaine Week 9

It seems that the groups are starting to take the forum and the project itself more seriously... I actually enjoyed listening to each group leader with how each group is progressing with their project... As far as our group leader at the forum goes, I was a bit disappointed with her. The reason for this disappointment was due to the fact that she was chewing a lolly while trying to talk to the class. I found this very unprofessional and hope that this person doesn't display her bad habits in front of the target group. Apart from this small incident, I thought that her effort was quite good.

There is no doubt that the forum was an important component of the simulation. By watching each other so closely, students judged which behaviours were useful to copy and which were unhelpful. Through this process of observing and trying out leadership behaviours, perceptions were formed about competence and power which were based on personal expertise and authority attached to hierarchical position. By Week ten some students such as Lillian, were able to analyse the types of behaviour that made her group 'look and sound' good. In the quote below she shows the level of intellectual skill I had hoped this learning experience could encourage.

Lillian Week 10

I was really impressed with today's forum report. It was detailed, yet concise and orderly. The group's efforts looked and sounded really good and well coordinated, simply because they are. It may sound strange but the forum is useful for me to get a good clear picture of how effective, supportive and organized our group is. I think our committee is the best, but I'm biased. Today I sat back and observed the body language of all the committee representatives. The body language they adopted is why our report was the best.

The following things effect the reception of reports:

- 1. Twitching looks unprofessional and immature. It indicates a lack of organisation; elevated voice pitch seemed to reduce audience respect; Long reports are boring, the forums get restless;*
- 2. Reading a speech from the paper is boring and looks and sounds unprofessional;*
- 3. A strong, clear, confident voice captures the forum; and a short concise speech sounds confident and organized.*

All of these points are why our report was the best. Our chairperson did all the positive things but not the negative.

Taking strategic action

For the simulation to be a realistic rendition of the health industry work environment, strategic, political action needed to occur spontaneously within the various student groups so that all could experience a climate where power seeking and political positioning occurred as people manoeuvred for control. The expected outcome was

that students would become adept at recognising and interpreting behaviours that contained political strategies, and be able either to participate or avoid involvement depending on their analysis of the situation.

The simulation was set up to mimic the contemporary health industry where skills associated with taking strategic political action are particularly crucial in capturing resources such as funding, infrastructure and personnel. The matter of relationships between concepts of power and politics in the health system was discussed during lectures and debated at various student forums. These discussions usually endorsed firstly, the probability that power acquisition within a complex organisation such as a hospital, depends firstly on understanding the political consequences of being identified as a person who wants to acquire and use power or as a person who has no interest in acquiring power. Secondly, that the person or group would need to establish their own power base either through expertise or through the formation of alliances, or both. And thirdly, that knowledge of political strategies used to accumulate and maintain power, along with the courage and daring to act on that knowledge, is fundamental to effective strategic action.

In setting up a simulated political environment for the students I took account of the somewhat idealistic notions of health care systems that students had previously experienced. For example, they may have thought that health care organisations are built upon rational systems where authority is held by those who earn it through legitimised processes, and who meticulously follow a sanctioned chain of command in the interests of clients and patients. Because this idealistic conceptualisation of organisational management endorses rational rather than political processes, it was foreseeable that students might feel unnerved when invited to question the validity of rational organisational processes.

Skills and approaches pertaining to political strategizing were discussed in the forums as well as during individual and small group consultations. Of particular interest to most students were discussions about specific strategies that could increase one's influence within organisations and groups. Briefly these included building alliances, controlling essential resources, managing problems and using expertise to reduce uncertainty around work and in the work environment.

As some of the starker aspects of political organisations were canvassed, students gradually developed shrewd insights about systems operating within the university, the health organisations they visited and the groups of students with whom they were

studying. Students became more comfortable with the idea of forming coalitions formed in order to compete more effectively for resources and influence as well as protecting vested interests. They realized that success in the simulation was linked to being able to establish a strong personal profile while working effectively with a group of colleagues who also sought formal acknowledgement for their achievements.

In most groups, students identified the assessment system as the first target for strategic action. They were keen to reverse what they regarded as an inequitable system of assessment. This seemed to be the focus of student discontent during the first few weeks of the simulation and was identified by most students as the cause of all of the disruptive behaviour that occurred in meetings. In considering strategies that might resolve the problem some students, like Emily, realized that equal participation and visibility in the minutes of the meetings would lead to shared success. Early in the simulation her strategy had been to convince her group to adopt a means of ensuring that everyone succeeded and they seemed to agree with her strategy. However later that week she began to realize that not all of her colleagues were as open about their political strategies as she had been.

Emily Week 2

I asserted my belief that we all should get an opportunity to chair or be secretary so as to distribute the marks evenly. I also argued for planning proposals and seconding so that everyone gets an equal opportunity to have their ideas heard so the ideas would (hopefully) be of more value to the group. I suggested that a rough tally be formed of the proposals and seconds and those with significantly less should be encouraged and given the opportunity to express their ideas. I believe this was a good idea and no one verbalised any problems with my suggestion.

Later that week:

Upon reading the minutes of our first meeting I was surprised to see a friend of the secretary's name appear more often than I can remember them having contributed. Perhaps I am being overly sensitive, or overly bitchy (probably more likely) but I would like everyone to get credit for what they do. Luckily now that everyone can only be chair and secretary once this will not often happen.

I have also observed that three members have informally formed a little clique in which they have made decisions throughout the week concerning the group and tell other members about this when action is about to be taken. For example, the forum time in which the chair and secretary are supposed to present the accomplishments of the past week was going to be given to their subcommittee. Outside of the meeting I argued that confident public speaking is a skill we should all practice and therefore if the chair and secretary do this we all may work towards competence. I have not said anything about decisions concerning the group being made outside of meetings as I wish to see if it continues; and I believe that to some degree it is necessary to get things done.

Still determined to get her committee to listen to her idea on how all students could contribute equally, Emily put forward a formal motion in the meeting, only to have it defeated.

Emily Week 3

Another problem continuing to exist is members rushing to propose and second to gain points. This is pretty much inevitable due to the marking system. The idea of a rough tally being made was proposed to ensure quieter members got to contribute, but this was not carried.

While it was Emily's contention that all students could earn 100% if they contributed equally to the work, her own strategy to achieve profile and assessment points was not going unnoticed. Julia who was in the same group as Emily took time in the first few weeks, to count up the names already recorded in the minutes and found that the most often recorded name actually belonged to Emily.

Julia Week 4

I've been looking at the copies of the minutes today. Emily's name is featuring quite prominently. I think she's going to get the gong for most mentions. In fact I'm sure she'll make sure she does. Too bad for the rest of us over-achievers!

Minutes were kept and ratified by the committee members and were not examined throughout semester by the lecturer. It was the committee's responsibility to compile the minutes and activity sheets that they wished to submit for assessment of individual participation. Access to these documents by all members of the committee was essential and when they all took an opportunity to read the minutes, Judy realized that certain aspects of the record did not reconcile with what had occurred in previous meetings. She insisted on a strategy to address the problem.

Judy Week 5

Again there was a problem with the minutes. To save time some wanted the minutes read silently by one member. I along with a few others insisted that the minutes be read aloud. Although there were a few grumbles, this was done. As it turned out, the minutes were wrong and had to be amended. I think that it is very important to read the minutes carefully, as they are a legal document which shows what occurred at previous meetings. Also, not only do decisions and important changes happen because of majority vote, but also individuals are recognised or not recognised for achievements.

Ways in which individuals within the group were working to accumulate power were thought by several students to be worthy of comment in their journals. For example, once she understood the rules, Trisha quickly adapted to the new learning environment and began to think more strategically about her behaviour in the meetings. In

preparation for action, she reviewed her strategic position and identified the people most likely to contest her efforts.

Trisha Week 1

Today was the first formal meeting for community. It all seems a bit confusing, as in I've never had to attend a formal meeting before, and propose motions, second motions, be the chairperson, secretary etc. It's all very confusing, but by the end of the meeting, I started to get the idea... One concern I can already see as a future problem is that of 'scoring' points for proposals and seconding proposals, it just appears to be a rat-race to get points. People in the group are saying things for the hell of it.

Later that week:

Yes, my predictions were right! It's a big shit-fight to get points within our group. Irene accused me of already getting 10 points (which I haven't), but, I can't stand by and let others get the points for ideas of mine. I can't help proposing motions, as I think what I believe would be beneficial, and propose my ideas and thoughts to the group. I can't sit by and not second a proposal in which I believe would be beneficial to our project, does Irene believe that I should ask her first if she'd like to second a motion before I do? Not a chance!

Kerlyn also realized that the basis of political strategising was to understand the rules of play and to work within those rules to achieve outcomes. Firstly she needed to understand her own behaviour and decide whether her responses were strategically productive. Once her own weak points had been identified, she was able to decide on a strategy and seek out political alliances.

Kerlyn Week 1

I know that when with a large group of people I tend to sit back and not contribute to my full capacity. I am easily dominated by outspoken people. It isn't that I do not have the ideas and suggestions, I just become intimidated sometimes. However I will work on this as I identify it as a weak point especially with a task such as this.

Later that week:

I feel to a degree that I am spreading stories and perhaps disrupting the peace, but yet if I don't inform the other members of the group who will. They don't have the slightest idea what conflict there is within the subcommittee, Isobel feels intimidated, same as me and Fay keeps everything quiet. Surely if we have problems we should inform the rest of the groups and perhaps they can help us.

Mona describes in the quote below, her interest in the various effects of rules and chairperson styles on achieving personal goals. It is interesting that within three weeks, Mona has developed an appreciation for order.

Mona Week 3

Well it worked. I just got the motion carried. Great! This meeting was more productive with the chair having a little more control over us than last weeks chair. The meeting seemed to run more smoothly and was more

productive. I didn't feel like butting in and taking over as much this week! (It was so frustrating knowing that things could have run a lot smoother and didn't). I think the lecture prior to this weeks lecture was well timed. It probably gave today's chair a little more confidence when asking people to be quiet.

It also became apparent at today's meeting that by following formal meeting guidelines and procedures it is easier, or maybe a more efficient way of making decisions. You don't end up debating an issue for hours on end, as I discovered once I noticed I had a bit of support from the other committee members. I was able to ask the chair to put my proposal to a vote which was then carried. End of discussion. Also, if you want things discussed make sure it is on the agenda!

With the formal meeting rules it allows the Chair to control debate without individual committee members taking it personally. I didn't hear any bitching about being asked to be quiet etc. as they are the rules that apply to everyone.

Students soon accepted the need to accumulate power and influence within their committees so that they could become more active in controlling the agenda. Within a few weeks, many students had discovered that bureaucratic processes offered a way of exerting some control over outspoken colleagues who had taken on leadership roles and then dominated the agenda. Quite a few also realized that there was some merit in destabilizing those who had seized leadership at the beginning of the simulation and were now beginning to exert their power over the group.

Throughout the various simulations, several instances occurred where the leader, chairperson or presenter was challenged by other students who had become sufficiently confident after a few weeks, to judge the amount of work and effort others seemed to be putting into their roles. If they were not satisfied, they could use rules and political means to oust people in leadership positions whose performance they judged as being less than satisfactory. Often this type of political strategy resulted in the person leading the allegation being elected to the newly vacant position, but not always. Sheryl discovered that she had mixed feelings about the coup she inspired through her proposal to introduce greater leadership accountability.

Sheryl Week 8

I have neglected to enter my concerns with the status of the subcommittee leader's accountability, and indeed the general functioning of our group. After the main committee meeting, I tried to instigate a process whereby we elect a leader not going presently to the community meeting. It's an awful position to be in, Lucy took offence and two other members were noncommittal. Marilyn went out on a limb in support of the idea. I explained to Lucy my concerns and agreed we'd seek Tracey's advice and discuss the issue at the next meeting. Tracey suggested options including a rotating leader which Marilyn and I immediately embraced the idea.

Later that week:

I feel responsible for the major change in our committee. Uncertainty best describes our next meeting because I'm leader. I still feel that accountability for external community visits will be gained from having a leader who rotates. Also it provides committee members to all have a chance to be actively involved. I have weighed up my actions and feel that honesty was paramount and so was reassuring Lucy that it wasn't personal, but merely to try and increase committee productivity.

What I did not account for in my desire for change was Lucy's uncertainty of role in the community visits. I feel I have now become the dominant one and this is inappropriate. We are a committee, who should be working together. My error was in explaining ineffectively that the rotating leader only affected leadership and not the community visits. I need to tread carefully and take a back seat for the next few meetings.

The following day:

I am disagreeing with my assessment of Lucy's leadership skills. She really is pulling her weight more so than myself... I have just learned to back off because my original assessment of the situation was inaccurate. It is extremely easy to judge those with responsibility when you don't have any. In that respect I have learned a lot about respect and not leaping in with both feet in my mouth.

Evidence appeared in student journals at around Week five, of strategies quietly being put in place by less outspoken students, to limit the mark-grabbing opportunities that had been a feature of earlier meetings. Most commonly, these strategies involved insistence on formal rules of procedure and a demand for transparency and accountability in all individual and group activities. Some of the assertive students, such as Genevieve in the quote below, began to wonder why her daring approaches were becoming less effective.

Genevieve Week 5

At the end Travis nominated me for secretary but Angela beat me on a vote. Someone suggested that I'd already been on the management team and it wasn't fair that I get another go until everyone else had a turn. I'd like to have another go at chairperson... While I'm writing this I feel really up tight - this assignment is a good idea but boy it's STRESSFUL.

Later in the simulation Genevieve found that the other students had become even more outspoken in their opposition to her strategies to get another turn at chairing the meeting.

Genevieve Week 10

Once again I was nominated for chairperson but everyone cracked up and said I'd already had a go. I ended up saying forget it. I'm such a wimp when it comes to arguing sometimes. I'm not giving up though - I still want to have another go at chairperson.

Across the various committees, normally outspoken students were discovering that being outspoken and 'fighting tooth and nail' had its own consequences and for

students like Sheryl, consequences sometimes involved being reprimanded by their previously shy peers for being noisy. This was a novel situation for Sheryl who believed that others should be aware of her concerns.

Sheryl Week 8

Role confusion and dissatisfaction between the whole committee resulted. Chairperson tried to maintain order, but this was difficult because of the agenda not being followed... Frustration has resumed mainly due to the Chairman's casual approach to the meeting. I had a hard time being heard today. Not above the noise but in saying my piece.

I think people are fed up with me, because although I agree with some proposals, I also think people should be aware of my concerns. It all sounds rather hypocritical and obnoxious, but it needs to be said. I had to fight tooth and nail for a treasurer to be elected. I didn't want to be treasurer, and the chairperson had had enough of me and dismissed me, as well as the whole committee. It was important though.

Although people weren't interested in focussing on ideas I also felt a total lack of interest and found myself reprimanded for chattering. That didn't feel too good, but was appropriate because today was difficult enough without constant interference. People are at the stage where they've had enough. Group cohesiveness was at an all time low and so was morale. A day preferred to be forgotten. People still are shy with their nominations and are silly in not acknowledging whether they want them. I blew my top today and was reprimanded again.

More and more students who had not previously considered themselves to be leaders, had begun to take on the weekly roles of chairperson or secretary, and all the work that these roles entailed. Millie's response to the experience was typical of many students who regarded themselves as being normally 'quiet' people. By adopting an apparent focus on performing leadership roles to expectations, they implemented their strategy of bringing into line the disruptive behaviour that had been a feature of the more outspoken members of their committees. Millie also experienced the consequences of implementing a successful strategy.

Millie Week 7

Well today was certainly a different meeting for me being the chairperson... I surprised myself and felt that I handled and controlled the group fairly well especially the loud ones. The only real problem I had was with one member who took it personally as to why I had asked her the reason she had for seconding another person's proposal. I definitely did not single her out of the group to say why she felt another member's proposal was acceptable to second. Everyone else had just stated why they were seconding a proposal with a very good reason, therefore I did not have to ask them why. I felt that I was doing my job as the chairperson would, by asking her why.

What really got to me was that she said things about me under her breath, and brought it down to a personal level when we are supposed to be acting professionally. I treated her no different to any other member throughout

the meeting and again after the meeting when I had to get the tape of the meeting from her. Through dirty looks and not even giving me the courtesy of speaking to me when I spoke to her after the meeting, she made me feel a bit sick inside and a bit nervous, as I do not like being at odds with somebody...

I felt that I was an effective and efficient leader... The committee meeting as a whole functioned well as excessive talking that inhibited discussion was stopped and on many occasions I had to bring the group back to certain proposals that were on the floor so as to not get led away by side issues. I felt that my secretary and I worked well together to keep the meeting running smoothly. I was pleased that the meeting was kept within the time frame.

As different group members approached me for advice on how to handle interpersonal conflicts within the committees I reminded them that it was within their power to bring about change if they used the formal structures and rules of the committee and adhered to the terms of reference that they had devised for their projects. Part of each committee's terms of reference included aspects of self-assessment or evaluation of their own performance. Some committee members were keen to work out a way of avoiding giving direct personal criticism to particular colleagues while at the same time heightening the awareness of group members about the effect of individual behaviours on group productivity. Annie and Moira implemented a strategy built on internal group evaluation to provide feedback on the committee's performance.

Annie Week 9

Moira read through the results of the previous week's evaluation. It had some interesting, mostly negative results, not surprisingly. However, I feel that we are beginning to get our act together as a group now that most of the hard decisions have been made and we are beginning to function more effectively. We are going to continue evaluating ourselves.

Group strategic action was also part of the behaviours that developed as students progressed through the simulation. For example, students began to develop group strategies that would safeguard their best ideas once they began to notice that ideas shared at the forums began to appear in subsequent reports given by other group leaders. The dilemma for Jack, quoted below, was that he realized the reports to the forums needed to be circumspect even though the value of shared information would be decreased as a result.

Jack Week 6

It is evident that in each week's forum so far, people, including our own representatives, are quite covert, rather than overt, in their discussions. Certainly, as the guidelines state, 'members must avoid excess talking and rushing the meeting', but if all committees cannot achieve at least some openness in their talks, then the forum situation may seem a waste of students' time and resources. I think that at this 'halfway mark' in our

committee work, some element of secrecy is required (particularly as we have possibly secured a 'guest' for our day's show), but more will be revealed in the near future.

I was aware that the students presenting their reports to the forum had adopted a strategy of putting forward the best interpretation of what their groups had achieved. Because I attended most of student committee meetings and undertook lengthy and frequent consultations with individuals and small groups of students, I was well aware of the competitive and political environments generated by simulation. Olga was similarly aware and reflected in her journal on the selective nature of the group presentations.

Olga Week 6

Arguments and disagreements reign during most of the committee meetings, although this is not actively voiced in the forum. All the groups are very secretive about the process and procedures of their meetings. Although this appears to stem from people being concerned about the marking system which is related to individual gain rather than working as a group to gain the marks which they wish to achieve.

Each group had five to six minutes allocated for their reports to the forum but as presentations became more guarded the time needed for presentations began to decrease, despite some prompting from me for more detail to be shared. Combined with the nervousness of students who were presenting, student strategies of information control, shortened the forum presentations to around twenty minutes, leaving the remainder of the forum available for debates and exploration of matters of general interest. Olga was not sure what was causing students to be brief when presenting reports and she wondered whether I had an educational strategy underway.

Olga Week 7

This forum was very brief as all the groups are being secretive about their productivity. I also think it has a lot to do with getting up in front of a large group and talking, so the quicker you get up there and say what you have to, the quicker you can sit back down and feel more relaxed. I wonder if this has something to do with us being prepared for public speaking. WHO KNOWS?

The forum presentations continued to be strategic and interestingly, comments by Ava and Jean who seemed to approve of this shrewd political approach, typified the attitudes of a large number of students.

Ava Week 9

It seems a lot of groups have been stealing or sabotaging other people's ideas and this is inhibiting what people are prepared to reveal in the meetings which is reasonable to expect - although I must admit that I have been guilty of doing this myself on one occasion. After all you do have to

look after your own interests and those of your group and when it comes down to it, we are all competing for marks.

Jean Week 9

Very little was said at the forum meeting. Each group appears to me to be keeping the secrets of their group to themselves. I think the idea that groups are competing against each other has really sunk in as nobody appears to be revealing anything of significance regarding their health promotion. Our group is also doing the same...The competition seems to be heating up.

Most students knew exactly why guarded presentations were occurring and each group watched intently as their representative gave a report of their work to the forum, while adhering to their strategy of not sharing their best ideas. The politically charged atmosphere of the forums at this stage of the simulation meant that what was being shared by presenters was in fact only a very small portion of the enormous amount of word that was occurring throughout the combined student cohort.

Peggy Week 8

We all decided to keep our most innovate and creative ideas within the group and not discuss them openly at the forum. This definitely showed the competitive sides to our natures as we wanted to be credited for ideas that were ours and not benefit others who simply decided to adopt them.

Throughout the last weeks of the simulation, fewer students commented in their journals about power and politics than in the beginning. For those who did, the focus remained on issues around building and using personal power as well as on the strategic opportunities bestowed through rules or position.

Familiarity with the system and increased confidence in speaking out in committees enabled some students to be rather daring when they saw an opportunity. For instance, Mairi, who had not had experience at chairing meetings, seized upon an opportunity to wrest control from a weak chairperson.

Mairi Week 11

As the meeting progressed I took the floor as the Chairperson was not effective enough. (This was not rude or done in any 'taking over' fashion. I just stood up and talked). I discussed the presentation stations, their details, and who was to man them. Perhaps I could consider finally this is my chance at chair as limited as it was! This was great fun. The chairperson should have really told me to sit and he do it instead, BUT he's too weak. He needs to learn assertiveness. This talking of the stations should have been done previously but too late - make the best of now.

Genevieve also continued in her attempts to have another turn at chairing the meeting. Her strategy was based on persistence and she was determined to achieve her personal and political goal before the end of semester.

Genevieve Week 11

At last I won - I was voted to be chairperson - all my persistence came through. I'd chaired the first meeting and now I'm chairing the last meeting.

The following week, Genevieve was chairperson and in the quote below she describes her feeling of self-confidence and satisfaction.

Genevieve Week 12

What a turn out! Everyone turned up for the last meeting except one person. I felt the meeting went well... My performance as chairperson was cool! I couldn't have done a better job. I found myself wanting to ask questions and I wasn't too sure if I was allowed. I even had to get forceful - some people kept talking when an important point was being made - so in a calm voice I politely told them to save it for later.

It is fitting that the final word on the learning experience belongs to Mona, whose quote opened this section of data. She clearly developed greater insight into why people might behave as they do and realized that some of her own earlier actions may have been hasty. All in all, Mona did learn about politics and how to manage meetings and quite a lot about people.

Mona Week 14

As it turned out the day went really well and I don't think there were any hard feelings. I had learnt a valuable lesson - I could have quite easily voted not to have the speaker, with my only objection being it wasn't discussed with the whole group. As it turned out it all worked out OKAY...

At the end of the day I looked around at our group and thought to myself there was definitely some working harder than others... Enough bitching but these people that don't pull their weight, can be disruptive and not allow all the group's energy to focus on the aims of the committee. I suppose the few who didn't seem to pull their weight could also have been the alienated minority who might have thought 'Well if they are making all the decisions they can do all the work', or maybe they are just lazy...

Everyone was extremely pleased with our presentation mark. I do think it reflected the fact that we had produced a very workable committee with some hardworking members. Despite the fact there was some bitchiness this seemed to be kept out of the meetings, most of the time. We had managed to achieve consensus on most decisions we made and this made us all that little bit more committed to our aims.

I must say it has been the most interesting, most enjoyable subject so far which has taught me about the importance of committees and politics and I have learnt a bit more, about myself along the way. Thanks heaps Tracey.

Discussion

In its simplest form, political acumen is the ability to analyse a situation in order to understand the agendas that different people and groups may be operating and to take

strategic action that will enhance one's own agenda. Before students could achieve the insight, skill and daring to take conscious political action many needed first to understand how power operated. Some students were surprised that political activities occur beyond government politics, and also, that acting politically does not necessarily equate with acting unethically. Once they accepted that it is possible to analyse human behaviour in terms of political agendas, students like Paula began to weave a range of information into her analysis while Gill and others like him could see opportunities for altering the impressions others might have of their political image.

Some students had linked concepts of political behaviour with unscrupulous activities and where this occurred there was a tendency to either make a moral judgement about the activity or retreat into cynicism to avoid having to deal with political situations. Other students like Estelle, were unimpressed at the idea that such behaviour existed within the health industry and among nurses. Binny and Ilze, responded to the dysfunctional group conflict and politics by trying to encourage a return to order through the application of power and authority.

It may be that pre-conceived ideas about how politicians behave during debate, set a low benchmark for students to follow as they debated and competed for profile within the committees. Certainly the most commonly journalled aspect of politics related to power struggles within committee groups and also individual attempts to resist domination or to champion ideas and values that seemed under siege. Examples of the range of issues related to power struggles are canvassed well by Kerlyn, Ilze and Therese in the evidence above.

Students' capacity for political analysis and strategic action increased as the simulation progressed. Skills developed in determining the real basis of power and authority and, as reported by Lillian, Binny, Julia, Harriet and Claudia, certainty increased about what could be achieved by individuals and groups.

For some students like Bert, initial steps on building capacity for political leadership occurred by attaching what was observed to be happening to something familiar such as a sporting team. For others like Jean and Claudia, the political arena began to be perceived as a system of counterbalancing pressures such as balancing the need to accumulate power against peer pressure not to seek or abuse power; or the silent pressure perceived to be coming from the tutor to behave ethically; or even the effect of bureaucratic rules applying to committee function and the allocation of assessment points.

Most students achieved a level of understanding about power and how it operated, and this enabled them to make complex judgements about who had power and who just looked as if they were powerful. Estimations of personal power ranged from perceptions by Frank, Emily and Marjorie about the effects of friendship networks on power, to Audrey, Moira and Letitia's reflections on political strategies arising from alliances and networks, to Travis's own admissions about what it feels like to be powerful. Within their descriptions of experiences of power there is a sense of revelation and a delight in being able to analyse what was happening and identifying possibilities as to why some people, groups and even they themselves, behaved as they did.

While groups tended to operate in ways that defended their own areas of responsibility, similar contests occurred between individuals within the teams. Some students like Claudia enjoyed the power of being a leader while in another group Robert was working on ways to limit the power of some of his colleagues. Some students such as Eleanor and Pamela considered the difference between the exercise of legitimate power and evidence of corrupt behaviour. Don was keen to understand who it was in his group who had the power and became an avid observer of his colleagues. Some students like Leigh, adopted a moral stance on the issue of politics and regarded those who sought power as having an ego problem. Significantly, many students like Tina, Cydne and Claire came to perceive quieter colleagues as not contributing because they did not care or were unable to do the work, and all believed that quieter students needed to speak up if they wanted to be part of a professional team.

Because each student focused on developing their own power base many discovered different ways of establishing their credibility. For instance, Audrey decided that control of the agenda was the way to influence resources and therefore the project. Binny decided to build a unique role as mediator that would enable her to be a leader without having to compete for the usual positions or chairperson or secretary. Trish did not want to compete either so she decided to establish herself as an expert in an area. Some students like Ken chose to be the power behind the elected officials as well as an occasional foray into the limelight of leadership. In every instance, the motivation underlying student decisions appeared to be the gaining of leadership credibility and the political influence that flows as a result.

Overall, student perceptions of their environment and the people within it changed from one that endorsed stereotypical leadership behaviour such as being loud and

domineering, to one where critique was applied to any leadership claim. Change was also evident in relation to early acceptance of the view that some students were naturally quiet and therefore could not participate. Gradually these students realized that they were projecting an image of being unable or unwilling to contribute, and that this was politically unwise and needed to change. They also realized that they could no longer afford to rely on the patronage of others and by the end of the learning experience they had devised various ways of being heard and respected by their peers and faculty.

In summary, overwhelming evidence exists in the student journals that the majority experienced a heightened understanding of the operations of power and the types of political behaviour that occurs in competitive environments. A large proportion of students also developed skills associated with strategic analysis and political action.

As they reflected on their experiences, students found a pathway through the complicated array of political agendas that emerged as a result of the competitive culture that permeated the simulated pressures of the health industry where each person's choices about their goals and how these might be pursued are political in nature.

Arguably the most significant learning outcome for most students was the development of deeper understanding of how multiple interpretations of the same incident can occur. This insight was apparent as students moved from a position of doing what they thought faculty wanted of them, to making their own assessment of situations and people, estimating the strength of any opposition and alliances, and then acting in a strategic way to gain advantage. Students learned to include all information in political analysis and to assess various people, situations and systems in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. Some learned the consequences of winning and others had to reassess their opposition and often alter their strategy in order to succeed. For the few who avoided taking bold steps to achieve their goals, there was evidence in the journals that they realized the political implications of the decision not to do so.

The act of seizing leadership and fending off challengers requires the type of political skill usually possessed by credible leaders. Student reflections on issues around credibility invariably led them to consider how personal expertise contributes to a person's base of power which in turn connects with the range of political options that become available to those who have power.

Political emphasis at the team level was mostly focused on reinforcement of team position or advantage over other teams. Most students subscribed to an idea that political advantage as a group was achieved through appearing looking cohesive and productive and having leaders who looked and sounded like leaders. Within the teams pressure was placed on individuals to live up to expectations made by the group. For example, group members were expected to develop expertise, contribute to teamwork, be accountable and demonstrate their commitment to the team and the project. For those in leadership positions, the consequences of not doing so included having leadership roles removed from them. For other group members, the consequences included being overlooked in the allocation of work and therefore the opportunity to gain participation points. In fact, the events that occurred throughout the simulation closely mimicked the types of interactions and unwritten accountability systems that operate within professional groups and across the health system.

Chapter 7: Experiences in personal transformation

Personal transformation, according to Holland Wade (1998) is a multidimensional concept that can be applied to nursing practice, education and research. Her definition of personal transformation was derived from a broad range of theoretical models and provides a basis for discussion of the types of personal development that students can undergo when facing challenging situations. In her definition personal transformation is:

a dynamic, uniquely individualized process of expanding consciousness whereby individuals become critically aware of old and new self-views and choose to integrate these views into a new self-definition. (p. 713)

She also recommended that personal transformation should be studied qualitatively as a phenomenon, because the transformation process is different for each individual. In fact she linked the types of socialization that many students in nursing experience, with the type of personal transformation that can increase critical awareness to a point where beliefs and concepts about being a professional and a nurse can be examined. These experiences are usually uncomfortable and Holland Wade (1998) recognize them as such when they state,

Students who experience personal transformation endure a painful, threatening and challenging struggle as they explore new rules, assumptions and criteria for judging nursing. (p. 715)

There are times in everyone's lives when situations not of our choosing must be endured. Our responses to these challenges can be opportunities for personal development and sometimes, personal transformation. For nurses such situations can also involve challenges faced by others in our care and because of the work we do, nurses are aware of the consequences for patients, of not performing our work well.

The resources people bring to bear on situations in which they feel overwhelmed are often personal ones and include intellectual skills and knowledge, as well as practical skills and ability. However without the courage to confront challenges that threaten to overwhelm whatever resources one might have, feelings of being lost and intimidated can persist to thwart any achievements that might have been possible under those circumstances. In the simulation, critical educational strategies were used to call upon student to find and use courage and daring in order to succeed. By so doing, I believed that many would access individual opportunities for personal development and perhaps even personal transformation.

The simulation was set up as an experience that would challenge students to consolidate their learning and to apply it to a new situation where they were expected to be self-determining. A common response by students to the simulation was to feel nervous. Student reflections indicated a range of emotions but mostly they experienced being overwhelmed by the idea of being involved in something so different from any other subject that they had done. They were also anxious about taking responsibility for the successful planning, implementation and evaluation of a public event. Student journal entries about feeling nervous and anxious tended to be more common in the first few weeks however, they fell off sharply after the mid-point of the simulation when time pressure gradually supplanted nervousness and students focused their attention on making their presentation a success.

Students throughout the experience often wondered about their own behaviour under these strange circumstances. They frequently wondered why they were so nervous, or how they might overcome nervousness and other responses that did not seem to be helping them in this new environment. Journal entries about bravery and courage started to emerge around Week three and were common between Weeks three and ten and again in Weeks thirteen and fourteen. An overview of the frequency of journal entries on aspects of personal transformation are provided in the Appendices.

Most students commented on their emotional reactions at the beginning of the learning experience. Many referred to feelings of confusion, inadequacy, apprehension and even panic, however there were few entries that did not contain elements of interest in what was happening and many expressed their determination to do well.

From the first week of the simulation, all students were confronted with having to overcome their fears of speaking in public and asserting points of view in front of small and large groups of informed people. For the most part, journal entries about feeling intimidated were written by students who regarded themselves as being 'quiet people'. As a teacher I was aware that some students were reticent about speaking up whereas others had little difficulty however, I believed that given an opportunity and sufficient support, all students could learn to take up leadership roles and, in their own way, perform well in those roles.

From Week nine onwards, student journal entries indicated an interesting shift in focus. At the beginning of the simulation some students had problems expressing their ideas in ways that captured the interest of more articulate students. As the semester progressed the focus of attention changed from individual oratory to the

acknowledgement of work on project tasks. Previously quieter students found they were more able to discuss the work they had completed and were therefore successful in having their names entered into the minutes.

There was also a noticeable change in the culture of the committee meetings where intense debate remained a feature of committee environments, but it began to occur in a more orderly way from Week nine onwards. Part of the cultural change was a growing intolerance of rowdy behaviour and students made it clear that such behaviour was no longer acceptable. A corollary of changes to meeting culture was that outspoken students began to realize that peer assessment of their performance had been occurring. This was something of which most had not been aware.

An interesting aspect of the student culture was that some of the more outspoken students were openly protective of their quieter colleagues. During most simulations it became necessary to raise issues in the forums around why some students might expect to be protected from having to compete in order to have their views heard. Also discussed was the related issue of who might benefit from quieter students being prevented from developing the skills needed to assert their positions against established leaders. In every instance, animated debates occurred and often resulted in widespread changes in student approaches to this vexed issue. In reading the student journals it was often interesting to note that at the same time as some of the more outspoken students were arguing for quieter students to be protected against personal development, many of the so-called quieter students had moved beyond needing or wanting anyone's protection.

In the sections that follow examples from student journals are presented to show how they perceived the effect of the learning experience on their personal development. A further section on how students believed they had developed professionally and also those who believed that as a result of the experience, they now had confidence, courage and the ability to speak out.

Personal growth and change

Generally, the perceived need to change one's approach to certain situations can range from a gradual appreciation of this need to a sudden realization that maintaining the *status quo* may have undesirable consequences. Students experienced a range of perceptions about the need for change, and regardless of the timing associated with

the development of these perspectives, most expressed concerns similar to Alice, quoted below.

Alice Week 5

In the weekly forum our chairperson with secretary as a support person, had to stand out the front of the lecture theatre and outline what the group achieved for the preceding week... I decided here that I definitely did NOT want to become a chairperson as I found the possibility of talking in front of the whole year very intimidating and I cringed at the idea! Unfortunately over the past three years, I still find it exceedingly difficult to talk in front of a group of my peers due to the fact that I am a very shy person. I am hoping by the end of the subject that I will improve in this area. After all, 30% of the marks are through tutorial and committee meeting involvement and since I detest speaking at all in such activities, I fear that my marks may be in jeopardy. All in all, I thought the forum was an excellent way of conveying information and to see the ongoing progress of the various groups.

For some students the presence of a supportive friend made all the difference. Judy was a mature-age student who admitted to being overwhelmed from the beginning of the simulation. Even though she was in the final year of her studies, Judy was afraid to speak up because of what other students might think of her and until now there had been no reason for her to try to overcome her reticence.

Judy Week 1

Today was the first lecture on Community Developmental Nursing. The amount of information given, left me feeling very anxious, totally confused and overwhelmed. I even started to tell my best friend that I should not be at university, because I am not going to be able to do this. She felt the same way.

By nature, both myself and my friend are very quiet individuals, only speaking up when we really feel strongly about a particular issue. Personally, I do not like to be the focus of attention, this may be because I am not very confident about myself, due to the fact that I had a very limited education, in which I did not make the most of. I think it is for this reason, that when I do want to ask and answer questions, I am afraid that they might sound silly, and so I keep quiet. The lecture left me feeling very scared and inadequate. I was dreading the first meeting, because of all of the above mentioned.

Being surrounded by friends helped some students to feel less intimidated, especially when they seemed to perform at a similar academic standard. As Therese reflected on the value of being among friends she realized that the experience was less than 'real'. Even so, she volunteered for a management position for following week.

Therese Week 2

Things went a bit better for us today. We are all starting to realize what these meetings involve. Because things are running more smoothly, we are all finding it a bit easier to interact and express ideas. I'm lucky because I know a lot of the people in our group from previous classes in the past two

years, so I find it a bit easier to open up than I would if I was in a 'real' committee meeting where I didn't know anyone. I am the type of person who can feel a bit intimidated when in a group situation such as this but having friends around who are as bad at it as I am helps. I nominated myself to be secretary next week, what have I got myself in for?

In her journal, later in the week, Therese began to wonder about being comfortable among her friends and yet not so comfortable among others. She realized that she would have to learn to express herself in more effective ways if her goals were to be achieved.

Therese Week 2

Later that week:

I really liked that quote from the lecture on Monday 'By our thoughts, we make the world.' This really makes me think, am I heading in the right direction. I won't make the world if I don't express my thoughts. I think this might just be a basis for our committee, if we want this presentation to happen, it will need plenty of input. I tend to reflect on things in my own mind and not express my thoughts and I don't know why? It shits me sometimes especially when I can talk around those that I do know so well. I find myself not being myself in such situations. Maybe I'll improve. I'll have to!

Within a month, Therese noticed that she felt more confident, more enthusiastic and comfortable expressing their ideas in public forums.

Therese Week 6

Today I left our meeting feeling very enthusiastic about the event and pleased that we have achieved so much. My subcommittee is composed of very like-minded people, it seems, and I am much more comfortable about expressing my ideas in front of people than I was before commencing this project. This has been such an amazing experience. I am finding myself turning into a chatterbox whereas before I was very quite.

While having friends around might offer some comfort in situations where one is trying to remain at ease, overall it resulted in fewer challenges having to be overcome and potentially therefore, fewer opportunities for personal growth. It is also probable that students who had been distanced from their established friendship network, may have gained more from the experience because of having to interact on the basis of merit or professional respect, rather than relying on friendship. For Dinah, the way forward was not to panic.

Dinah Week 1

The idea of forming a committee and working with a group of people that I didn't know quite well was rather frightening. I felt frightened because the idea and of forming a committee was very foreign to me. The formation of a committee with the intention of developing a health promotion program so much more than just a tutorial group. The involvement, commitment and work is going to be greater and extended (not just academic but also

emotional). However rather than panicking and indulge in negative thinking, I will reserve my judgement at least until the first committee meeting.

Dealing with personal challenges through learning to be more assertive, had the effect of prompting some students to consider what they were doing about these challenges and how they might be changing in terms of learning and development. For instance, as she considered what she was learning through the simulation experience, Millie jotted down some thoughts in her journal about her own behaviour in meetings. By Week five Millie realized she was changing.

Millie Week 5

Again I feel everything is going well, and our task force is getting organized. In fact, believe it or not, I'm actually starting to enjoy the committee activities and what they involve... Well, it was certainly a different meeting to last week. Everyone in the group, including myself, voiced their opinion on a number of occasions, with little hesitation. I did not feel any hesitation or apprehension this week in speaking out as I knew everyone this week and decided I was not going to sit back and let everyone voice their opinion, when I had an opinion on topics also. I think this committee is making me into a stronger person as I am normally a fairly quiet person until you get to know me, so that's a definite plus.

Three weeks later, Millie's confidence had grown. Her journal entries took on a business-like tone and her earlier concerns about interpersonal conflict were replaced by an interest in ensuring that group members were held accountable for performance standards.

Millie Week 9

I felt a feeling of confidence in my achievement in having completed my part of the programme, especially when it was accepted by the committee group today as finalised. One aspect I found was interesting at the meeting today was the results of the questionnaire we all completed last week. I was relieved to hear that the results showed that the majority of other committee members also felt concerned about the successful functioning of the group. Therefore as I thought last week, this group evaluation would, and seems to have helped to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the group process and functioning. It will be interesting to see if the evaluation shows this result of the group being more effective and working together as a team more effectively next week. A more successful, less cut throat (in competition) committee meeting.

Among many of the more outspoken students the responsibilities and expectations of leadership roles were also found to be interesting and at times challenging. Because formal leadership responsibility was new for most students, many used their journals for some introspection on personal change. In some instances critical reflection related to trying to develop skills, while for others it meant facing a dilemma such as evaluating past decisions about the way they should behave in certain situations. Travis was keen

to develop leadership and management skills and following his first experience at chairing a meeting, reflected on his own behaviour as well as the various events that occurred during the meeting.

Travis Week 5

Today I chaired my first meeting... I felt that the meeting went well and we got a lot established. At times I felt that because of discussion we were sidetracked, so I kept on attempting to bring discussion back to the topic on the agenda and acknowledging that a certain issue was a 'side issue'... I feel that getting the control and attention of the committee will be made easier as we get more comfortable and accustomed to the protocol of the meeting. Something although which I have already noticed is that I try hard almost to the point of being stern on decisions to ensure that discussion goes my way. I noticed that I was doing this in the meeting and attempted to encourage consensus to a degree, by ensuring that all members were agreeing and comfortable with the decision made. This is something which I need to work on and which I feel as leader will provide me with the opportunity to do so.

For some students this experience was not the first in their lives to prompt personal transformation processes. By Week five Beth could see the link between what she was experiencing in the simulation and that as a professional nurse she may have to speak up. In the quote below, she considered the dilemma she now faced in becoming personally competitive.

Beth Week 5

We have just had the forum, and I know already I don't want to get up next week and give a little speech - but there are some things in life you don't want to do that you just have to...I guess it all boils down to the fact that this is what it is like when you get out into the world, except instead of fighting for points you are fighting for resources and money. To be quite honest, I guess I just don't want to face any of that yet... I am a person who is competitive by nature. This has not done a lot for my relationships... So I have been trying to decrease my competitive side of my character. Having to become competitive again is frightening and difficult since I have been wrestling against it.

Within a few weeks of commencement students in the simulation usually learned to critically analyse and most expressed uncensored opinions throughout their journals. Tina, for example, reflected on the value of forcing quieter students to 'speak up' and become more productive.

Tina Week 5

There was the usual shit fight during the first half hour of the meeting with a dozen motions on the floor none of which had been seconded and going nowhere. This is where I feel the dominant players of the committee show their value as they sort out the mess and put the meeting back on track.

In this meeting we reviewed the outline of how marks will be allocated for this subject. I feel that such an outline that included things such as 1 mark

for proposers of motions and 0.5 for seconding that motion makes committee members do such things as put motions in the hope of gaining marks and therefore are not a true representation of their feelings. However, I do see that it could also work for the group and force the quieter ones to speak up; and lead, to make a more productive and cohesive committee.

By Week eight, numerous journal entries contained a sense of quiet reflection on past behaviour. Some, who had admitted being very intimidated early in the semester, took a moment to consider how they had changed because of their increased ability to operate power and take action on their own behalf. Leah for example, describes in detail her insights about how assertive she had become.

Leah Week 8

Our next task was to determine who should be in the presentation, which proved to be an interesting experience for me. Both myself and another student wanted to gain the role of presenter. Instead of voting on the issue, an action we wished to avoid, a group of students became very vocal in their support of me, saying that I should have the part because I helped to write the play. The part was then given to me. The other student involved in the incident was apparently very upset that she missed out, and her friends were murmuring amongst themselves about how unfair the decision was.

This particular group of people had asserted itself as the dominant group in the committee very early on, and I feel that there are several reasons for this. The fact that it is a very close-knit group and its members are very comfortable with one another may account for this, as may the fact that they are all very vocal and so their opinions and suggestions can be heard over those made by other people. This group was also quite large and geographically located itself in a central position in the room. This may also explain the dominance of this group, because by being in a central location attention was focused on it. On this issue, however, it would seem that this group was overruled because other committee members became very vocal in support of me.

I guess that this is the first time in this exercise that I have experienced politics. I felt very bad after about gaining the part because I upset another student in the process. I guess this is because I have always been the type of person who allows people to walk all over me and it is hard to change this type of behaviour when I have been this way all my life. However, university has certainly made me more assertive than I used to be, and I hope that this incident will help me to develop more assertiveness and instill a more ruthless attitude in me.

With a week to think about the consequences of winning, Leah was fully aware of the political aspects of taking on a leadership role to which others also aspired, but also, she realized the inevitable consequences of failing to act in her own best interests.

Leah Week 9

I have been thinking about last weeks incident and I do not feel bad or guilty any more. I feel that I am very capable of playing the part of the presenter very well. The fact remains that I gained the part and the person

who missed out will simply have to accept this, as it is her problem, not mine.

This activity is becoming very political and I am thankful for the opportunity to participate, as it is helping me to develop a fighting spirit. I am glad that I moved from regarding this incident as being my problem to viewing it as the other student's problem, relatively quickly. I feel that this represents a change in attitude for me as in the past I would have taken a much longer period of time to arrive at this conclusion. I am beginning to realize that unless I fight I will not gain enough marks to attain a good overall mark for this subject, and this could ultimately affect my employment prospects.

Many students were thwarted by political strategies as they attempted to participate in their committees. As frustrating and uncomfortable as these defeats were, some students took the opportunity to consider what may have caused them to fail, and to think about what alternative strategies might have succeeded. Mavis was silenced by a chairperson who seemed unfamiliar with the rules of debate. On reflection, she decided to be more assertive in future.

Mavis Week 2

I raised the issue that perhaps it is better to pick which subjects will be incorporated into the presentation format. Three other people agreed, however the Chairman mentioned two reasons why my view could not be discussed... I didn't think that the second reason was a good enough one and I felt unsure of what to do, so I did nothing. I thought of the guideline to committee meetings procedures that those who 'disagree' with a motion should be allowed to speak first, as they may raise a valid point that has not yet been considered.

Later on, I realized that I had sat back due to two reasons. One, that it is not usually my nature to be loud or aggressive. And two, I usually choose to stay quiet in order to keep harmony. However, I realize that instead of discussing my views or disagreements after the meeting (as I did today) I must be more assertive during the meetings. This is not so much to gain points, rather for my own satisfaction of getting my view heard and considered, you never know, it just might be good stuff.

Perhaps the best indication students views on whether they had experienced personal growth or even personal transformation, was found in journal entries during their final week. Most students at that time, took the opportunity to reflect on the value of the simulation and were able to sum up what they had gained from the experience. It became clear that even the more confident and outspoken students had felt overwhelmed from time to time because they tended to push themselves in terms of taking on challenges, often well beyond what I would have asked of them. The selection of quotes below cover a range of student perceptions on the subject and while they canvass different events, a common theme is the conviction they held about being able to use these new skills and attributes following graduation.

Bert's final comment about what he had learned was grudgingly honest. As a student who had responded poorly to the subject and its content in the first few weeks, Bert now believed that he had developed some valuable insights about himself and other people, and this emotional subject was to blame.

Bert Week 14

We are all now in a mad rush to get this project finished, to be honest I cant' wait until this is all over. But I must admit that I have learnt a lot out of this subject which I can apply to almost all of my life. Another thing I can say about this subject is that it gives you a chance to really see what a person really is. Also there is no other subject like this that raises so much emotion or thought. I honestly thought I would never say good things about a subject that would cause people to get so emotional.

Travis reflected at the end of his journal, on a meeting he had had with the leader of a community organisation. During that meeting he had confronted and overcome feelings of inadequacy, leaving him with a sense of achievement and self-acceptance.

Travis Week 13

Today I was confronted with fears of intimidation, embarrassment and failure which I can now confidently say was only a reaction of anticipation and anxiety - and it demonstrated how little confidence I have in myself and in my abilities. I today attended a meeting at the community organisation to present the aims, purposes, activities and program of the day. As I previously mentioned I initially felt intimidated and afraid of the meeting. I perceived that we would be seen as students purely 'carrying out a project' and that they treat us as students and infants. But I came to the realization that just as they are professionals, we were students in nursing soon to be professionals in the domain of nursing. With this in mind I regained both the power and authority which I was previously unaware of and of which I held little faith in. I saw myself as an equal to them and not as a subordinate. I was representing the profession of nursing and presenting to them an example of the role of nursing within the promotion of health in the community...

While we were presenting the project, I could see myself observing for anything which might indicate failure. I don't know why, maybe its because failure is more acknowledged than success and we seem to learn more from failure than from success. I was observing attentively for body language demonstrating boredom or indications that we were wasting their time, but they only seemed interested and willing to help us out in any way possible... It was great to see them taking our event seriously, but I've realized that we are only ever going to be taken seriously if we ourselves believe that we are credit-worthy. Today not only taught me about how little faith I have in myself but the need which has just developed, which is to trust my instincts and have more faith in my abilities, to take my successes for granted as much as I do my failures.

Concern about personal development was not limited to considerations about one's own growth as a professional nurse. Students were aware of the range of differences in students' capabilities in articulating their ideas and asserting their views and most took

an interest in how others were also changing. Most notably were the changes in behaviour among students as they neared completion of their projects and prepared for their community presentations. Leah's observations of her group were typical of the comments made by many students about the personal growth they observed in their colleagues.

Leah Week 12

Today's meeting was run informally and was a little chaotic at first as we tried to ascertain the availability of all our resources. However, after this chaos had subsided a bit, each committee member naturally delegated themselves to a particular job. The people in the subcommittee found their costumes and moved to the other end of the room to begin practicing... The others moved to the other end of the room to begin assembling the sample bags. This happened very smoothly, and is an indication that people are more comfortable with committee work and the concept of working as a team than they were at the beginning of the project. This could be attributed to everyone experiencing some form of personal growth throughout the project, or it could be something that should have occurred naturally in the final semester of a degree programme, regardless of whether or not this project was undertaken.

Whether or not the type of personal growth mentioned by Leah can be attributed to the simulation is difficult to guess but almost every student made some mention of having developed personally and noticed similar changes among the other students. Irene's final journal entry is typical of the reflections of many students.

Irene Week 14

When a group comes together and are keen to achieve the one objective, with a little work from everyone it will be achieved. From a rowdy group in week 1 we all have learnt a lot, especially me. We have formed an efficient group and are happy with our achievements... As for the issue of speaking up. I think I am best at speaking up when I feel greatly for the subject, and I know what I am talking about. I don't like to be caught arguing with nothing to back me up. Which is a good thing.

At the end of the simulation, the self-doubts that had tormented Mavis at the beginning of semester were no longer a problem. She felt more assertive and more confident and she believed that the simulation had provided her with an opportunity for personal development.

Mavis Week 14

I had been so scared at the start of this University subject, but I am so glad I have been given this opportunity for personal development. The whole experience has made me feel more confident in my ideas and opinions and I have learned to be more tactful and assertive and this is necessary when dealing with people of various ages and personalities. Furthermore, this experience has emphasised the benefits and advantages of working together as a team. How exciting!

Looking back over the semester it is possible that some students experienced a significant personal transformation. Judy was one of those students. From initially feeling that she should not even be at university, to her experiences in voting according to her conscience and then defending another student, Judy developed in ability and confidence without losing empathy with her colleagues.

Judy Week 14

Overall it was a great subject! Everyone enjoyed themselves and the presentation was a great success. The target group said they got a lot out of it and welcomed us back anytime... I should not have worried and should have had faith in the committee. Everything came together very nicely. I was very proud of everyone involved, especially my friend. She has really grown through the experience of this whole subject, I have too... Thank you Tracey. You're a very wise woman.

Letitia believed that the simulation had helped her to understand some of the issues faced by nurses in the health environment. By Week fourteen, she was feeling more confident than she had been at the start of the simulation.

Letitia Week 14

The very nature of this course has seen the utilisation of the media in the promotion of nurses to the wider community. Positive exposure to the community is one tool utilised by other groups in society to gain status and thereby power. For too long nurses have undervalued for their contribution to the health care team. By giving us an understanding of the dynamics operating in a committee situation, this course gives us some insight into the workings of society in general, especially when there are rewards involved, that is, marks; or in society, status, money and power.

For other groups and students the marking system that had caused so much disruption and strained so many meetings, now seemed fair. Even Rowena, who had argued against the assessment system for most of the semester, admitted in her final journal entry that it had worked and in fact, she now thought it had been easy.

Rowena Week 14

It became evident how much work really had gone into the project and also that when it comes to marks no-one will miss out. Thus, again Tracey's layout of the assessment worked. Overall I feel very happy with the way the project turned out and I thank Tracey for the opportunity to see how easy it all actually was. So in future, if I was approached to help with such a project I don't think I would hesitate.

For Lydia, who in Week five had just wanted the whole awful situation to stop, the subject had helped her to feel capable and assertive, something she had not believed possible when she started.

Lydia Week 14

Looking back I have found this subject very helpful in my learning and development. I feel that the teamwork, and the committee meetings have

pushed me to be more assertive in looking out for the groups best interest and my own personal interests. I believe that I got great satisfaction out of this subject, because at the beginning of the year I didn't believe I would be capable of doing well in this subject. I am very proud of my committee group, and myself for what we achieved in this subject, and project.

Professional growth

Reliance upon friendship networks for assistance during undergraduate studies was commonplace among students but I anticipated that the employment environment into which they would soon graduate was unlikely to contain a similar level of emotional support. In the simulation students were encouraged to regard friendship networks as personal and secondary to work relationships in the hope that they might learn to be less dependent upon emotional ties and adopt a more professional, intellectual approach to working with other people. Students adjusted to the formal committee environment where the need to work efficiently together to achieve the teams' goals. Many of the social interactions that had previously defined their relationship with one another were no longer automatically conducive to productive teamwork.

In many instances, achieving a professional work relationship turned out to be easier in situations where students did not know each other well and where friendships did not complicate interactions that needed to occur in committees. Such issues were debated in the forums and many students realized that where prior friendships did exist, these needed to be preserved by agreeing that friendship did not really belong in committee meetings and could be relegated to leisure time. Still, many students struggled with the concept of separating emotional friendship from work relationships, even though they could appreciate the advantages for professional nurses who were able to do this.

The above discussion relates to the type of socialization processes that are undergone by anyone entering employment. These processes enable those entering a new work environment to be able to perform the work and to understand and adapt to the organisational culture that they have entered. Buckenham (1998) argues that socialization can be both normative and individualistic as a means of changing oneself but he believes that an understanding of socialization can also help to develop ways to help people to gain more worthwhile experiences from their working lives. Of particular interest is Buckenham's observation that students have a natural tendency to identify with teachers but this diminishes in the final year when their cognitive processes are channelled by their anticipation of events. The process of socialization or self-change can include constructive revision which is the reconstruction of something that has

been invalidated; changes in patterns of construct relationships; and development of new constructs which is the most difficult to accomplish. In his conclusion, Buckenham (1998) applies his observations to the socialization of nurses:

Understanding these changes should help in both assessing the neophyte in relation to the development into the roles they aspire to, and in considering the changes that an individual must go through if they are to perform effectively within a role. Another use that may be developed from this information is related to the appraisal of both student nurses and qualified nurses. If knowledge of the role constructs of the nurses considered 'the best' are identified to share similarities then assessing nurses on these similarities and identifying differences may enable us to more accurately design learning experiences to engender the desired changes. If this is possible we may be able to fashion programs that target specifically individual needs and so become more effective in the areas of professional and personal development. (p. 880)

It was hoped that the learning experience provided by the simulation would assist students to develop towards the roles to which they aspired and thereby be better prepared for the responsibilities of a professional nurse.

In their work on the professional identity of nurses Ohlén and Segesten (1998) found that increased self-esteem played a key role in their professional development.

Assertive nurses believe in themselves and their abilities, which is assumed to lead to further personal and professional empowerment. Compassion, competence, confidence, conscience and commitment are referred to as the most significant attributes of caring corresponding to the image of the professional nurse... while competence, compassion and courage are found to be characteristics of the excellent nurse. (p. 722)

Throughout the student journals are references to the concepts of self-esteem, self-image, professionalism and professional self-image, as well as professional function and roles of the nurse. In many of the journals students commented on their feelings about developing as a person who is aware of what they can and cannot do, yet believing that they are ready to take on the roles and responsibilities of a registered nurse. This development can in part be attributed to students' willingness to accept nursing professional values and to internalise professional codes of ethics and behaviour.

The evidence provided in student journals certainly indicates that personal change and transformation occurred during the simulation. Whether the simulation could be said to be the only stimulant for self-change is less certain, however a large number of

students claimed that their personal growth was as a result of this experience. My own conceptualisation of the contribution made by the teaching strategy is that for most students it was a catalyst for personal transformation which, for some, may have occurred anyway as a result of completing their degree.

Typically, journal entries during Week One were quite emotional and expressed anxiety about having to adhere to formal rules of behaviour in order to earn assessment points for participation. The roller-coaster of emotional reactions to the simulation are vividly expressed by Angela in her very first journal entry.

Angela Week 1

When I was initially told that we were to be a member of an official committee organisation and we had to present a community development project, I was very excited. It will be an interesting, fun and a thrilling new challenge. My feelings of excitement soon faded when I realized what was involved in such a project. I began to panic. Oh No !!! I was not scared about the presentation day... but the fact that there have to be so many different formalities involved. Official meetings are to be held with a chairperson and secretary. If I want to speak or propose something, I have to be recognised by the chairperson before I can express what I want to say.

The most disturbing thing about this is that marks are awarded for the proposals made so the more proposals I make the more marks I obtain.

This worried me immensely and was probably why I became so scared. I am usually a listener and rarely voice my opinion in large groups. I hate being the centre of attention so I probably won't be standing up in front of everyone proposing something. I definitely won't be volunteering for secretary or chairperson. I guess if I want to get anywhere professionally I'll have to take a huge step forward and overcome my fear. This I doubt very much that I can do.

Reflections on professionalism as a means of overcoming conflict within work groups was something that students reflected on during Week five. There seemed to be a growing appreciation of the difference between professional and personal behaviours. Students such as Mairi, who commented upon this aspect of committee functioning, could see that responding emotionally to committee business might hinder the progress of the project.

Mairi Week 5

STRESS!! This was an extremely intense meeting. A lot of friction occurred between certain group members. It was interesting to see how if one isn't acting in a professional manner the potential for people to get personal increases. I felt this confrontation did not reflect favourably upon the committee members involved. This unnecessary behaviour hindered the entire committee performance. The surrounding debate was establishing nothing, and the friction was increasingly affecting greater numbers of committee members.

Part of the challenge of working within a formal structure was the level of concentration needed in order to ensure that the business of the meeting was achieved. By Week five most students began to feel more confident as a result of taking on the responsibility of committee leadership. Beth, quoted below, apparently found the experience exhausting but worthwhile.

Beth Week 5

We have just had the committee meeting. I was chairperson. I am now totally exhausted. I didn't realize how much more you had to concentrate. A few times the group got a little out of control. It was the first time I had been a chairperson, it can only take practice to make you better. You can't know what it is like until you actually do it. If I get another turn, I feel I will be better able to chair 'cause I now know what to expect. Towards the end I started to feel more comfortable. I think I also started to feel the power, that when I said they were out of order, or no they could not speak, then they didn't.

Of foremost concern to students who experienced this simulation was the issue of group cohesiveness. At the beginning of semester students depended heavily on pre-existing friendships or on working relationships associated with travelling to and from campus, and in a few instances, their membership of study groups. The simulation required students to find ways of working with other students while at the same time establishing their own individual profiles within the groups. I had anticipated that students would adopt a goal oriented approach to their group work, but not at the expense of existing friendships. Not all students succeeded in being able to separate professional interaction from emotional, social relationships but most did. Of those who learned to move beyond social ties, most felt they had achieved a skill that would help them in their professional roles.

In the quote below, Paula describes her concerns that her colleagues were not working in a cohesive way. Her observations were a good example of the level at which most groups were functioning around Week five of semester.

Paula Week 5

The meeting minutes were not left for people to read before the meeting so that nobody really knew what was on the agenda for the day. Unfortunately no one likes to get to the meetings earlier than scheduled including the secretaries. This means that people are arriving up to five minutes late; therefore the minutes are not read. Quite some tense moments and it really looks as though it will not get off the ground and will be a flop on the day. No-one seems to be able to work together and seem to be more interested in getting their own points up to enable them to get a pass. They don't seem to realize that putting up a unified front and performing as a group gives them a better chance of securing a pass.

Professional interactions occurred between students and members of the community organisations who had agreed to sponsor the group presentations. This meant that students had to become involved with the general community and in particular, to interact with professional people in positions of authority. Janice found she had to overcome her difficulty interacting with authority figures and by Week five, she was quite proud of changes that seemed to have occurred as a result of the simulation.

Janice Week 5

I often wonder if I have changed in character as a result of having these weekly meetings. I think I have! I find myself much more willing to say what I think and feel, especially in front of a group of people which I must say, I couldn't stand a few weeks ago. I have become even more assertive than what I was previously, and I am proud of myself, as I seem to handle situations with a much wider mind than before. I do realize by doing this project many feelings I used to have towards high, authority figures, such as the director of nursing have also changed. Before, I used to be very uncomfortable for example, with the director of nursing, I suppose I felt that I owed them something because they were 'important' people, but I am no longer intimidated by their positions, whether they are director of nursing, lord mayor or even the prime minister, who cares what position they play, they are still human just like me, but of course I still respect them for the position they hold.

A watershed time occurred soon afterwards for Janice who found the experience of having management responsibility for the meeting quite exhilarating. She appreciated the tutor's acknowledgement of her performance, something that reinforced her feeling of professional competence.

Janice Week 6

I was Chairperson yesterday for our committee meeting. I have never been put in such a position before. But it felt wonderful, believe it or not. I felt I was in control most of the time, and getting order to the meeting when needed. I did better than what I expected. I handled myself and the meeting quite well, even though it was my first time as Chairperson. The agenda was followed and completely covered, we even had enough time for a chat after the meeting was over. I felt a little insecure having our tutor watching over me being the Chairperson, but she actually commented at the end of the meeting, that I did a great job, being Chairperson. I was quite excited at that point of time, as if I had won something. I guess I have won something which is the technique of being in some way of leadership and directing the way for something to be achieved. I am really looking forward to presentation day. So is the rest of my team.

Other students also believed they had increased their professional skills through having to work with professionals in the community. Winifred and Marilyn's experiences of interacting as a professional with others in the bigger world, enabled them to think that the confidence that they now felt they had developed would benefit them in their nursing careers.

Winifred Week 9

Today went really well. Everyone there really enjoyed it and got something out of it... Overall, communication and self-confidence of everyone had greatly improved. Communication is much more effective because everyone now communicates more honestly and confidently. We also feel more comfortable around each other now which also assists better communication... I feel that this experience of liaising with other professionals has helped me professionally with my conduct and communication in the hospital.

Merilyn Week 9

It has been such an experience for me to go visit the community representative once a week. It has given me self-confidence in dealing with an authority person. I am now able to talk to him on a one-to-one level, explaining our group's activities and asking him for any suggestions. I am so glad I chose to visit him now. It has also helped me with my speaking as, when I am talking to him, I have to think before I speak which has become a great benefit to me. This experience will help me in my speaking at my interviews, yet to come, with nursing.

A skill that is generally expected of any professional person is that they are able to present their ideas in front of other people and for most students, this was a daunting part of this simulation. Estelle knew it was a skill she needed to learn but the consequence of performing badly were a deterrent.

Estelle Week 7

It is very hard sometimes to talk in front of a large group and discuss your report. It is good experience though to learn to speak in front of a large group and submit your own ideas and not something you have a reference list for... Often you believe your idea is very good, and will make a difference to the overall presentation, but once it is stated and everybody else had commented that yes it is a good idea, but it can't be used in the presentation, you become embarrassed and think your ideas are worthless and will not comment again in case your idea is not good enough yet again.

Within the various committee meetings some students were still trying in Week seven to establish their personal profile within the minutes. Students were beginning to realize that time was running out. Some students, who had earlier contributed to the rowdiness of meetings, like Holly and Annie quoted below, decided to behave more collaboratively and to show more respect.

Holly Week 4

During the meeting, last's weeks fiasco was discussed and it was decided not to do this kind of meeting again...I totally agree... and looking back, the reason for our huge arguments was that nobody was listening and everybody wanted to get their point across without thought for others. I also think my behaviour in the meeting was disrespectful and I hope I can curb this in the future.

Annie Week 7

The group met formally today... I must admit that I felt very frustrated following the end of this meeting. I am getting sick of this every man for himself, dog eat dog, attitude of the group. It is quite obvious that certain people are making proposals and seconding ideas in order to gain points without thinking about the group as a whole... I think we all need to learn how to get along and start learning how to function effectively as a team, myself included! I am going to make an effort to get along with everybody and show some respect in order to gain respect from now on.

In her Week ten journal entry, Angela captures the type of personal and professional development that was hoped for in the simulation. Angela had been reticent about speaking up in the earlier weeks of the simulation and reflected later about a meeting where she had been told to be quiet when speaking out of turn. From initial outspokenness, Angela moved through a period of self-assessment to where she was determined to show more respect for the project and her colleagues, and work on what was now important to her.

Angela Week 10

The meeting seemed to be good today. Everything seems to be slowly coming together... Today the chairperson was foreshadowing a motion and a student tried to speak against her. She had the floor so told him to shut up. Beth has a knack of using the power she has to her advantage, she uses it wisely. I think foreshadowing a motion is a great idea because in previous weeks people have been talking and were about to make a proposal when someone else would butt in and propose it. Not many people knew you could foreshadow a motion. I have noticed that it is so hard to adhere to the official procedures especially when I have something to say that is important. I have to stop myself from just shouting it out and taking over.

Referring to a point I made previously about wanting to speak whenever I could, I am glad I was stopped by the fact that this was a procedure. If every person spoke out of turn whenever they wanted to the meetings would be ten times worse than they were.

Interestingly, not all students perceived active debate and political positioning as negative behaviours. Dinah's group was just as actively engaged in competitive behaviours as were other committees involved in the simulation, yet she perceived the activity as being a relatively normal aspect of committee functioning. She was quite sure that her group was taking a more professional approach to its work than the personal and emotional approaches that seemed to be occurring in other groups.

Dinah Week 9

I have noticed that our group has tremendous cohesiveness. However this does not mean that we don't have disagreements or conflicting issues - because we often do, but when we do, we put into practice our conflict resolution skills and our problem solving skills. Another positive aspect that contributes to the effectiveness and productiveness of our group, is that

when a problem surfaces, we confront it and try to solve it within the committee meeting, thus, separating our professional work (relationships) from our personal relationships.

Week ten journal entries about competition seemed to take a more measured view of what had been happening between members of their committees and even the rules of formal committee procedure were referred to in less emotive terms, even when reflecting on the restrictions these rules cause to personal freedom. For example, Travis in Week ten reflected on the changes in student attitudes towards the assessment system. He now appreciated the professional processes that encouraged the group to deal with considered proposals and to work towards consensus and team goals.

Travis Week 10

Initially, when Tracey presented the marking system, based solely on the effort of individuals within the minutes of the general meeting, it was each to their own. A weekly goal was to get your name of the minutes as many times as possible. But as we progressed, proposals are coming naturally and are more substantial and conducive to the development of the project. We are unable to just propose anything that comes to mind. It involves a critical thinking process in which we prepare to present the proposal, discuss the effect of the proposal and submit it for seconding or dissent. The process runs smoothly if consensus is reached but a monotonous and tedious process is involved when dissent is motioned.

Towards the end of the simulation the committee environment had changed from being a hot-bed of emotion to one where process was followed and professional standards of behaviour were expected. The energy level within the meeting room remained high with most students more aware and self-confident than they had been at the beginning of the simulation. Following the presentations in Week thirteen, some students took a moment to consider the benefits of the experience in relation to the professional skills they had developed as a result of the simulation.

Allan describes below, his newly gained professional skills in forming a view and then articulating it in a way that is undeterred by confrontation. He also detected a level of personal insight and determination of which he had been unaware.

Allan Week 14

We have become very effective 'debating and evaluating machines.' I feel that I have learnt to look at many angles of a particular point, enabling me to decipher effectiveness and appropriateness of certain actions. This newly gained skill will, I believe, enable me to evaluate a situation a lot better, and reach a decision in the best interest of the target group, whether it be a patient or a person in the community.

This experience has also taught me to evaluate myself, in regards to my actions and thoughts, and incorporate these skills into my future career as

a nurse. I also learnt the importance of finalisation and follow through of an action. If actions are only talked about and not followed through, then there is no real use in discussing the topic in the first place.

Holly also reflected back over the attitude changes she had experienced during the semester. The professionalism that had evolved as a result of the experience had convinced her that even though the project had been a lot of work, it had been worthwhile.

Holly Week 14

Reading the comments from the first few meetings feels really weird. It is rewarding to see how the group has put personal feelings (as well as attitudes and beliefs) aside in order to do the presentation. The amount of aggression felt during the first few weeks now seems very silly. Our whole group now gets on very well and is a credit to how we have evolved into professionals throughout this process. Basically, the amount of work we put into this process reflects the excellent outcome.

Throughout the simulation I attempted to use humour to alleviate some of the stress students were experiencing and to encourage a culture of friendliness around the project work. Luella noticed the benefits of a happy working environment.

Luella Week 11

All we did today was prepare our presentation and basically have a good laugh. Laughing is good, it relieves stress and allows everyone to relax. I think you need to laugh and get along with your co-workers, it sort of creates a bond and camaraderie between everyone. It also gives people respect for each other, we're all in the same boat, and gives us a chance to learn to cope, accept and enjoy others whom we wouldn't normally associate or become friends with.

A further indicator of students moving from an emotional to a more work-related interaction was a willingness by team members to spend time on their project. Travis agreed and believed it indicated progress within his group.

Travis Week 13

Something which I've noticed in the last couple of weeks is that, although we're all keen to get the general meeting over and done with, we all seem to hang around for what seems minutes, which turns into half an hour. As we approach the culmination of the project, communication seems to be increasing amongst subcommittees and we really seem to be getting somewhere, and progress is not such an estranged concept to us. Well it shouldn't be considering that our presentation is on later this week...

Our final meeting closed with the chairperson restating that we all have done well and that although we have all had differences within meetings, they should not be taken out of the committee setting and that we all should still remain friends as before the committee began. For some reason I did not feel relieved or excited, maybe because it will be over soon when we've presented it. The meeting closed and we all remained consulting with each other, finalising more details and continuing on...

Many of the students reflected on the experience and benefits of working in a cohesive group. Claudia's final comments below, on friendships, are typical of the views of many other students whose friendships stood the test of competition and politics, and emerged stronger from the experience.

Claudia Week 13

The presentation was a success! I am so relieved it is all over. Everyone came together well on the day. The displays were good, the food was great and the audience were very receptive. There was a minor sound problem which caused a little trouble during the first speech... I'm a bit upset with my speech. I got really nervous for some reason wishing that a hole would open up at my feet as soon as I stood before the people. Overall I was proud of my group. Afterwards we had a working bee to assist in the completion of the folder.

I know I was very far from perfect in the group and if I had the chance to do this assignment again there are many things I would have done differently. I believe I have benefited from the subject, it's opened my eyes to a whole different side of Nursing and group work.

After the way things turned out it's easy to forget all the conflict we experienced. After reading back through my journal I realize I didn't see the problems building up. I think friendships and strong ties are what got in the way throughout the construction of the project however, I also think that these ties are what got us through in the end.

Building self-confidence

From the very first week it became apparent to many of the less assertive students that decisions were being made by their committees, without their input, that had implications for their participation in the projects. Self-doubts and being slow to respond in meetings, caused some students to reflect on why they had missed these chances to participate. Wanda was one of the students who regretted not being confident enough to put forward her idea, especially when another student presented an idea similar to the one she was considering and it was endorsed by the group.

Wanda Week 1

During the meeting we were told to think of a topic for the presentation. I thought of an idea but as everyone expressed their ideas I began to think it would be great if all of the topics could be incorporated into one major topic. My own pessimistic attitude rejected this idea as I thought it would be too difficult. Then Harry suggests this idea to everyone and we were all keen. I should have suggested this when I thought of it but my confidence was lacking during this first meeting and I wasn't sure of the 'rules' and when to speak. I wanted to understand how a committee meeting works.

Lack of confidence was also hampering Dinah and she wondered what she might do to overcome approaches that were not working for her in this new learning environment.

Dinah Week 1

Well the committee meeting was as I expected. Confusing! and for me personally - nerve racking. I sat in the meeting for one long, long hour, hoping that no one would call on me for anything. I am a reserved person. I don't say what doesn't need to be said. Public speaking - only when I have to. I also found it a little intimidating when voices were raised and fighting to get names into the minutes. The procedures of the meeting were complicated and the atmosphere, unsettled.

For the next meeting, I think I will need to examine the procedures of the meetings more carefully, and if necessary discuss my concerns with my colleagues or Tracey. I do hope that I will feel more comfortable and have more understanding and confidence to participate in the next meeting.

Wanda used her journal to release some of the frustration and disappointment that she was feeling about her own lack of confidence in the meetings.

Wanda Week 5

I don't think I am chairperson material, I can admit this as one of my downfalls... At the conclusion of this meeting I was very discouraged as I just realized that members will not listen to you if they don't want to.

The whole meeting also depends on the chairperson. For example at this meeting I had my hand raised waiting to be asked to speak, two other members had their hands raised before me and two others raised their hands after me. I was the last person asked to speak and by that time what I had to say was not relevant to what the discussion had now led to, therefore when I spoke, it was like no one even listened to what I had to say. I find this very frustrating, in fact I found the whole meeting a waste of time... I kept on saying to the group that... Noone bothered to listen to me. I've decided from now on I will make sure that I am heard and heard by the whole meeting members, not just the ones courteous enough to listen to everyone (I'm sorry about this but I must let out all my discouragement and frustration)

For me personally I found the meeting an eye opener and I have realized that for myself to be heard I must be a lot more stronger and forceful (but not go too far) OR I can be 'Miss Popularity' and everyone will listen to me. I know I still sound sore and disappointed but I'm sure we will all improve as the meetings progress. That is if we can all agree to the one proposal. Someone will make a proposal in our group, I'll think it's a great idea. Then another member will object to it and tell us why, and I think 'yeah, they have a good point', it wasn't a good idea after all.

Many students observed the enthusiasm displayed by more outspoken colleagues and often they were unimpressed with the quality of ideas being proposed, but they were not sufficiently confident to engage in the debate. Within the first few days, Irene believed that the experience was strange and she found it difficult at this stage to express her ideas.

Irene Week 1

Having and running a committee meeting was, I think, a strange experience, for myself and others in the group. Keeping the meeting rolling

in the right direction was not easy due to the above point... Dominant parties emerged in the meeting, while others sat back and were happy to just agree or disagree. I find it hard to put my point across to the group. That is an inability to express myself and my ideas. I hope to get better at this.

By Week two of the simulation, fewer students journalled about feeling intimidated. There was an increased introspection about their own behaviour and how they might need to gather more information in order to participate fully in these rowdy committee meetings. Irene was still trying to overcome the feeling that she was too slow during debate.

Irene Week 2

It is amazing how deciding on groups and who will go in them is so hard when you have 16 people arguing about it... As for motions, I sit there and think of points and information in a way of keeping ahead of the committee. It is only when someone proposes a motion that I was thinking of that I kick myself for not mentioning it. I am definitely too slow, and I am no good at articulating the points I have. Hopefully the more meetings we have the better I will get. As for the committee we are slowly working out problems and progressing.

Judy realized in Week two that she didn't speak up because she was uncertain of the rules of debate and did not want to be ruled out of order. From the quote below there is evidence that Judy had identified her own learning needs and was prepared to work on what she regarded as her skill and knowledge deficits.

Judy Week 2

Personally, I voted against this idea because I believe that the topic is already a publicised issue, and many people would be aware of the importance of it. I did not give my reasons at the time because I was not asked. On reflection, I realize that even though I wanted to speak and give my reasons, I did not because I was not sure if I would be out of order, and I felt very unsure of myself. I made up my mind to read up on general meetings, because if I knew the right procedures it might help to allow me to speak on matters that I did not agree with. Thus, this may allow me to have some input, and maybe other members could be persuaded into thinking the same way as myself.

'Knowing the right procedures' was also regarded by Leonie as a means of overcoming some of the problems of emotional content of meetings. Her entry below illustrates the level of confidence she had reached which enabled her to accept difference and not rely on friends to validate her opinions.

Leonie Week 5

The meeting went a lot smoother than previous meetings but there was still people talking over others and not resolving one topic before moving on to the next. On the whole I found the meetings improving and having an agenda and minutes on the notice board helped immensely.

I feel maturity has helped in these meetings as I can accept people have different points of view. I understand that people who may be close to me may also have an opinion and I don't get offended if my 'friends' don't support me in my proposal or my views. I could see this was not happening with other committee members, some seemed to take it personally when someone disagreed with a comment or idea.

Sometimes students found their voice in their committees once they had analysed the interactions and contributions being made by their colleagues, and discovered that their own opinions were just as valid or even more so. Winifred had been reticent about expressing her views, until she realized that confident input had its advantages.

Winifred Week 5

I'm so angry... They are being really stupid, and I think they go out of their way at times, to cause an argument to get what they want. Eventually we decided on what we will all bring... I am extremely confident in myself now and speak up no matter what. I'm communicating more effectively with everyone and argue well when I don't agree.

With her newly found self-confidence Winifred was beginning to see a change in her colleagues' levels of confidence as well as her own ability to work within the group. Her group seemed to be learning to express their views openly and at the same time, they had developed sufficient confidence not to react emotionally to what was being said.

Winifred Week 7

This was another successful subcommittee meeting. This is the best group I'm involved in. We get along really well and feel comfortable and confident around each other. We work great together and can talk to each other really well without taking comments as personal attacks.

The following day:

I enjoy working in this group because everything is equal and opinions are taken seriously and discussed. Communication between us is so much better than it is in the overall group. Each of us (in this group) seems more confident and willing to speak up and question things. I feel more comfortable in this group compared to the big group at this point.

Later that week:

Today was pretty good. I think group cohesion was achieved today. The chairperson had control, everyone spoke in time and gave strong reasons for proposing or seconding something. Confidence and self-esteem were high for everyone and communication was more effective.

After observing me debating an issue with the students during one of the forums, Millie could see that being able to confidently voice an opinion was important. As she reflected on what she had seen, she began to feel more confident.

Millie Week 5

The forum, what we realized after, was an exercise put upon us by Tracey to engage the group in a heated debate. The exercise certainly worked, and I think it made us all realize that we have a right to have an opinion and voice that opinion, in the correct and proper way. Overall I feel all activities

so far have been an important part of a new challenge and learning experience for me. I must say I felt more confident and relaxed in talking to the group today, and I think everyone else did too.

I hoped that students would benefit from observing confident role models and I attempted to portray confidence in my presentations. I was aware that twenty percent of the students were men who may not easily identify with the behaviour of a confident woman. I therefore invited a male colleague from the community to address one of the forums on the topic of presenting information to the general public. A critical moment for Bert occurred as he listened to the animated and charismatic speaker. Bert began to wonder if he had the ability to inspire others in the same way and as he journalled he realized that this different way of learning was causing him to take a more questioning approach to all that he did.

Bert Week 6

It scares me to say but I felt 'empowered' inspired, this was one of the few people who can really actually understand what you meant by empowerment. It was like I got a type of natural high, maybe one day I will have the ability to do this to other people. Although this is supposed to be the goal of our speech, I really wonder if we have the ability to do it. I not only doubt our own ability, but I also believe that as an audience it will be hard to actually give them the feeling of empowerment. But then again I am a bit of a cynic. Another important thing this fella brought up was that much of all the health world is made up in terms fighting for funds. One trying to say they deserve it more than the next. Should it really be like this? Well if it is we better be ready for it.

You really stimulate me to think of the lectures. I think this subject is really assisting me to learn deeply. I've never been in a subject before where the lecturer provides us with information that actually puts my thinking cap on, Maybe I'm exaggerating. No, I think it is just a different type of learning and it is more self oriented which makes me question things more closely and change what I do as a result.

The focus for some students was on their own responses to stressful situations such as the one experienced by Lillian when she was abandoned by her colleagues who had promised to support her proposal.

Lillian Week 7

I did not enjoy today's meeting. I noticed that I dread speaking in the meeting. The moment I open my mouth, I feel my face heat up. I imagine my face going red. This happened today not only during the report that I gave but during a proposal I tried to promote.

I had previously set the proposal up with two other students. When it came to saying it they folded on me and it failed. I was embarrassed but frustrated because I endeavoured to communicate effectively to these two girls but it didn't work. Tracey, however saved me. She asked me if I would like to amend my proposal. I tried to look cool, calm and unembarrassed but I'm sure it didn't work.

For many students the building of confidence seemed to be tricky and elusive. In Don's case, the path to self-confidence involved overcoming an earlier perception of himself as being slow during debates. His confidence seemed to build however as he became more familiar with his environment and built confidence in his committee.

Don Week 6

I realized why I haven't been going well. It is because I'm the type of person who needs to think things over before I can do or say them. I can never win an argument because I'm too slow. I don't think I'm stupid, just too slow to win an argument.

A few days later:

I felt very confident after the meeting. It seemed like it was coming together at last. We have all learnt our place in the committee procedures and things flow well. Still unsure about this subject though. Is it beneficial? But it is all coming together. I wasn't sure if our committee could create something as creative as a presentation but we are going to. I'm personally impressed with everybody doing stuff.

Don's confidence in his colleagues was short-lived and in Week seven, he expressed a loss of faith in the ability of his committee to complete their project. He lacked confidence in his own ability to influence other students and clung to hope alone.

Don Week 7

What a joke. We might think we are going to pull this off but we haven't got a chance. I don't think we could organize a riot in a brothel! They're just pissing me off. You said we should organize groups, but I couldn't be bothered. I don't believe that if I put in the effort that people would listen. We're going out on prac with no real direction for our presentation. I think it is a lost cause. I think our only hope is that our speakers can pull it off by themselves. We are relying on them so much, it's not fair.

Many students wrote abundantly about certain experiences that had special importance for them and in some journals the processes of development that they were undergoing, emerged as they wrote. For instance, Sheryl had waited until Week six to try chairing a meeting. She was aware of how unsupportive her group could be and just before the meeting her confidence failed and she sought me out. In Sheryl's detailed description of the meeting and her analysis of the way the meeting progressed under her direction, it is possible to detect her growing sense of confidence arising from taking on a personal challenge and performing it well.

Sheryl Week 6

Being a chairman isn't as easy as I imagined. About half an hour before our meeting I panicked and found myself planted in Tracey's office looking for reassurance and definitions of processes like foreshadowing motions; taking the floor; and resignations...

Power, control and trust were what I experienced today. Chairing a meeting is no easy job, and neither is maintaining order. People just don't shut up or

think before they propose. Marks are still the main motivator for this activity. Impartiality in ruling and directing a meeting is extremely difficult when you are busting to say 'no, that's not right.' I tried to redirect and suggest changes to a proposal to no avail and finally settled on a compromise.

Part of my role was to summarise and refer proposals that were unclear back to the committee. I wish I hadn't done this because I felt persecuted when I didn't do it appropriately. It is extremely difficult to control 19 people approximately all at once. I thought I had wielded too much power, yet others thought I hadn't exerted enough...

My next moment was one of sheer power which was received off-handishly by the committee, yet I felt extremely proud of it. I actually referred a problem back to a subcommittee telling them that leadership within their committee was an internal matter and to be decided between the members at a more appropriate time. I felt in control and thirsty for more. I finally felt at ease, prioritising, deferring and settling important agenda items. I felt I had done a good job yet felt awkward about telling my colleagues to be quiet and that those already who had been warned could leave the room if they persisted. It's a hard line to take especially when people pull faces at you.

Many things were discussed and I found it hard to keep up because I was still trying to come to terms with the fact that I couldn't say my piece because I had to be impartial. I got a lot of satisfaction in seeing our ideas take shape with me being chairman, especially when you can see progress being made.

Group cohesiveness in the form of an agreement to review presentation resources was the first sign that we were all united in a common goal. It is also pleasing to see others being rewarded for their achievements... Both ideas were accepted, and I felt a bit of fun was allowed and as chairman, instructed a round of applause. The hardest thing though was being impartial and keeping track of the changing ideas, not to mention seeing who was first in seconding proposals. One good aspect of our group's behaviour is that at the end of the day we are all friends.

Self-confidence appeared to be firmly established among most of the students by Week ten. Lucy had been avoiding election to chair meetings because it meant that she would have to speak to the forum. She accepted nomination and worked on her confidence during the semester break.

Lucy Week 9

At the end of today's meeting I have been nominated as chairperson. At first I declined but people talked me into it. More than anything I think it's the thought of the forum that turns me off, anyway it's not till after the holidays. Maybe I'll get used to the idea by then ... I hope!

Her preparation paid off and at the end of the meeting she wondered why she had been so scared.

Lucy Week 10

This week I was the chairperson. This was pretty scary as I really didn't know what my role would be exactly. As well as being nervous about the

role of being chairperson, I was also feeling slightly ill. All this made the situation fairly scary. I do think though that the meeting went well, it seemed controlled and really I don't know why I was so worried about it.

On their return from semester break, other students noticed that some previously shy colleagues were surprisingly confident and capable of insisting on order. In Beth's journal entry below, there is evidence that her meeting behaviour had been controlled by Lucy, a previously quiet colleague, and she did not particularly like it when she had the confidence to overlook her.

Beth Week 10

The committee meeting today went well. Lucy was the chairperson. She carried out her role better than I thought she would. When she said to be quiet, people were and they listened. However there were quite a few occasions when people spoke over her and over other people. I will admit I also did this, only because I knew I'd get away with it and I felt I needed to say what I was going to say. A couple of times I had my hand up and I was not even recognised at all. I could see she had seen me but said nothing. I can't explain why, maybe she was looking straight through me. In the end I butted in. I felt it was the only way I could have my say. I feel this was a reasonable response because I had my hand up for ages and I won't stand being ignored all the time.

During the final weeks, Don reflected on why he had been unmotivated and uncomfortable with the simulation. He thought about his level of confidence but concluded that he was more unmotivated than lacking in confidence.

Don Week 12

Looking back at myself, I don't think that I haven't got any confidence. It is just that I haven't thought about it enough and rallied enough support to get my ideas through. I think I really summed that up pretty well. I just haven't thought about it enough. This relates to all my university subjects and is probably why I am going so badly and have this lack of motivation. Last year I was thinking all the time about nursing and university, but this year, nothing. Maybe I am just so scared about failing this semester that these feelings are coming out. I really want to be a nurse...

All of the community presentations occurred in Week thirteen and the relief and sense of satisfaction that the majority of students mentioned in their journals indicated that they believed they had gained in confidence from the experience. In terms of entries relating to development of self-confidence, Don's quote below was typical of other students' entries and verbal accounts of the experience.

Don Week 13

I can't believe it. We actually pulled it off! The day ran pretty smoothly. Sure there were some bad points such as... This can be related back onto all of us. If we were more together then she would not have had to... and these duties could have been assigned to different people and the workload shared. Jesus Christ! I think being on the assessment subcommittee has

gone to my head. Just listen to me - if she had done that - If she had finished this and not that - Bloody Hell, Mr Negative or what?

It went really well. I could not believe it came together. It actually looked like we worked well as a group. Friends and just plain associates were really found in this subject, which I think is an invaluable lesson. This will help me in the future about making judgements about people and how they act toward me.

In his final journal entry, quoted below, Don admits that he has learned a few new things about life and about himself and while he does not directly mention self-confidence, the tone of his journal entry indicates a desire to be a confident adult.

Don Week 14

A problem with this subject is that quiet people, who have done heaps of work and supported other members of the group, are not going to get marks... because their names aren't scattered throughout the minutes... But I suppose that's life and I suppose that is what I think you have tried to teach us. Thanks a lot! I wish I could write that like I said it, it was meant jokingly. I think you made us think about life a lot earlier and in more depth than I felt comfortable with. Hopefully I have grown and won't be a naive child hiding in a man's body anymore.

For many students the final presentation of their projects to the community group required that they act confidently and work together in the interests of all involved. In Joyce's view, the confidence she now had was as a result of the combined experiences of undergraduate studies however, she acknowledged the gains in terms of self-confidence, that she had accomplished through this learning experience.

Joyce Week 13

I was initially very nervous but when I was on the stage I felt at ease and I remembered all my lines... I feel that over the past 3 years during the tutorial presentations and speaking in front of the class has helped me a great deal, particularly for today's presentation... Overall I feel that this subject has been very enjoyable. When I first started it seemed that the community project would be a very hard challenge and at times it seemed impossible to develop a program... Nevertheless by looking back at the last 10 weeks I have realized that this subject has been a very rewarding experience.

Finding courage and daring

Fears of failure and embarrassment, fears of disappointing friends and colleagues, and fears of being different, all contributed to student experiences throughout the various elements of the simulation. Each student faced their own challenges at different times throughout the simulation and in this section, evidence of students finding courage and being daring is presented.

The first lecture associated with the simulation was meant to be one that placed a context around the learning that would be available to students over the coming months. While some students wrote in their journals about being keen to be involved, others were overcome by fear and anxiety and needed to find the courage to continue. For example, Angela steeled herself in the belief that the skills she could learn would benefit her as a nurse, if she could just 'tackle' her fear.

Angela Week 1

I have thought continuously about the community development project and my general feelings towards it. I realize that I have to overcome all my fears and leave them all behind me. I must look at the situation from a different perspective. This project will be a great opportunity to have my say and tackle my problems of fear head on.

I also look at it as a positive thing by saying to myself 'if I get up in front of everyone and say what I believe then it will mean more marks for me.' Doing this will mean pushing myself beyond my limits which will be very tough. Examining the situation, I began to realize that the project is preparing me for the real world - what's out there when I leave university. How can I progress through my job and achieve great things if I can't even voice my opinion in front of eighteen people. This experience will definitely help later on, I hope. It will be interesting to see if I accomplish what I have planned to do.

Blaise was daunted by the prospect of competing when she didn't seem to be able to get her ideas across. She knew she would need to be brave if she were to succeed in the simulation.

Blaise Week 2

I found that my own input is still only minimal, I do have many thoughts and suggestions, although I don't seem to get them across. However, this will have to change, as when reading the handbook, it emphasises that you have to compete effectively for your own share of the marks, and avoid letting only one person do all the talking, therefore getting all of the marks. I find it difficult to be brave enough to speak up and say what I think.

Most students wondered at the possible rationale for the simulation even though the purpose and processes involved were explained in detail at the outset. Some students, such as Leonard quoted below, reflected on the experience of their first meeting and tried to relate it to the theoretical content presented during lectures.

Leonard Week 1

In lectures this week, I don't think I have learnt very much more about what we are doing in regard to meetings and the presentation day, however, I believe that the content part of the lectures could, subtly, be forwarding assertiveness skills upon us. This could be relevant to the day as it's going to take a great deal of courage on our behalves, to get up in front of fifty to sixty people we don't know.

Students also wrote about the empathy they felt as they observed colleagues struggling with their fears. For students like Wanda, watching their colleagues attempting to bring order to meeting chaos was almost as difficult as chairing the meeting. She realized that the emotional responses that had been a behavioural feature of previous meetings, would no longer work and shouldn't happen.

Wanda Week 7

Being a team leader is not as easy as you think it would be. What a meeting! Poor thing, she did her best under the circumstances. She nearly had an argument with one of the team members. Our group has a real problem. I've noticed some people get too offended if their proposal is objected or criticized. This shouldn't happen, if you have an idea, OK tell everyone, if someone objects they should explain why and you should understand their point of view.

Leigh describes below an incident in which she observed a colleague being placed in an uncomfortable situation because she lacked the 'guts' to defend her idea.

Leigh Week 1

The thing I noticed about today's meeting is that it can be easy to feel group intimidation and how you feel pressured into following what the rest of the group does so that you don't feel like the odd one out. In one case, Penelope put forward a proposal (which to be honest, wasn't a very good idea and wasn't very well thought out). When the chairperson asked who was in favour of the idea, no-one put their hand up. When he asked who was against the idea, everyone put their hands up. Penelope, after realizing that no one liked her idea (and not wanting to be the only one to put her hand up in favour), put her hand up as well and actually voted against her own proposal. The chairperson said to her, 'You can't vote against your own proposal.' She just shrugged it off and the rest of us couldn't believe it. I guess that when you are in a group situation such as ours, it would take a lot of guts to be the only one to vote for or against a proposal, or voice an opinion that is different to everyone else's.

Quite a number of students made reference to either 'having the guts' to take action or 'being gutless' and in most instances they seemed to apply this rather brutal assessment to themselves. As she reflected on the day's events, Norah became angry with herself for thinking of ways to avoid public speaking, something that she wished she could do with ease.

Norah Week 3

Today was the first of our forum feedbacks. It entailed the Chairperson and the secretary from the meeting last week, standing out in front of the room and reporting to the rest of the students (in the whole year), what went on in the meeting. The chairperson did the talking while the secretary just stood there for moral support. I made a mental note not to volunteer myself to the chair. If I really had to I would, but standing up and talking in front of such a large group of people is not on my list of favourite things.

This mental note angered me later in the evening because I felt gutless. Although I don't think I lack confidence amongst my peers, I've never been fond of presenting things to large groups. I have only just gotten used to giving tutorial presentations to about twenty people; but I suppose this is something I have to work on. I actually feel quite jealous when others present things with such ease, and without the 'blotchy neck'.

Harriet also doubted whether she was brave enough to chair a meeting. She knew it was a challenge that she would eventually have to confront and was in no doubt that success would depend on finding courage.

Harriet Week 3

The idea of being chairman or secretary still frightens me. By watching the last couple of weeks I don't think it's a job for me. Also I still have no idea of what minutes are and when they need to be written. As for chairperson, I'm not really a dominant character, therefore probably this isn't the position I should take. After reading through last week's minutes it gave me a better understanding of what needs to be written, but still not enough to take the position of secretary. Perhaps in a few weeks I might be brave enough to give it a go... Overall these meetings still scare me. I'm sure though that it will all fall into place in the future. So I'm going to think positive. It will all work out. I hope so anyway.

Four weeks after wondering if she had the courage to try, Harriet overcame her fear of taking on a leadership role and in the quote below she describes the satisfaction she felt as a result.

Harriet Week 7

Last week I was nominated for secretary! I can tell you that I was absolutely freaking. I was going to decline but realized that I need to have a go. It's the only way I'll be able to learn from the experience. So anyway I said OK. I'm really glad I did now. Because of my fears I now feel a real sense of satisfaction. I did it! It really isn't that awful. Tracey was helping me a bit on how to write things, so it wasn't that bad. I hope the minutes are correct. I'm going to get someone else to read over them before I submit them to the folder. They look OK to me.

In the quote below Leah describes the strategy she used to deal with her fear.

Leah Week 8

I feel as though I over-reacted last week and I realise, upon reflection, that I tend to panic at times. In all other areas of my life I seem to have learned to recognise when I begin to panic and to control this, but because committee work is so new to me I have not yet learnt to control it in this area. I resolve that next time I feel myself starting to panic in a committee meeting I will try to stay calm and centred and to not let other people's feelings affect me.

Invariably, students who took up chairperson positions despite finding the experience intimidating, seemed to find the courage necessary to get through the ordeal. Eleanor describes just how 'scary' the experience was for her.

Eleanor Week 10

Being a chairperson I had to speak in the forum. Talking in front of a small group is stressful but to a group of all third year nursing students! I felt I was going to faint. I was not sure of what to say so I just talked about the major issues that we encountered in the meeting. My voice was shaking and breaking all through it. I was glad when I finished.

Even participating in the processes of committee meetings caused some students to feel panic. Sheryl was quite distressed when her proposal was rejected and even though she knew she should not take it personally, it was personal and she knew she would have to be even more courageous to try again. In a display of bravery, she accepted nomination to chair the next meeting.

Sheryl Week 5

I actually had my first taste of a 'void proposal' when the committee rejected my idea. This was amazingly distressing as I did take it personally when a room full of people disagreed with me. I'm not sure if I'll be brave enough in the next meetings to try and be as productive because you do take it personally and feel rejected. There really are no friends in these meetings. At least I'll have a week's grace because I'm chairperson next week. Now that should be interesting. I am a little scared though and have borrowed a book...

Occasionally students found courage in defence of others rather than simply acting in their own interests. In the following quotations from Judy and Mavis' journals there is evidence of bravery by both students as they supported each other during meetings. Mavis felt disempowered when another student took one of her ideas and then, when a colleague defended her, she became uncomfortable.

Mavis Week 1

Once again, this seemed so formal as the minutes from the previous meeting were read and refreshed my memory. So much progress has occurred in just two days.... A member from the subcommittee raised discussion that ... be the topic and it agreed by all that this subject could be part of the whole speech. The same person then proposed the topic I had suggested should be the topic. I felt disempowered as she was more assertive and spoke louder than me. I was unsure of what to do, as my colleague nudged me on the leg to be assertive, and regain my point. Before I knew it a few members spoke of how I already had proposed that, the Chairman called for order and the secretary minuted my proposal. Although this pleased me, I felt uncomfortable.

Later I wondered if this was because I felt like I was being greedy or self centred by wanting the recognition and the point for having proposed the motion. I have been brought up by my family to be thoughtful, don't interrupt, be quiet! We all should be trying to work together as a team, not fighting to gain points. This I agreed with and after the meeting the system of point scoring was criticized. I wondered if part of the reason for this system was to teach us how to resolve conflicts and to motivate us to be

assertive. The conflict that had occurred at the meeting made me realize that it can affect the team spirit, if not resolved.

It had been Judy who decided to speak in support of Mavis when another student tried to take credit for her idea. Judy believed that Mavis was not able to speak for herself so Judy took up the challenge on her behalf. Later, she questioned her own motives in relation to her action.

Judy Week 3

The meeting was so disorganized and noisy, that some members did not know what they were voting for. In addition, ideas from the less aggressive members are being proposed by people with more dominant personalities. For example, Mavis proposed a motion that [a topic] should be the main focus of the project. Although she was heard, the motion was totally ignored, and other discussions took place. The same motion was put forward again later, this time it was not ignored. I nudged Mavis to speak up, but she did not. At this stage, I found myself questioning the marking system, as it seemed that marks could be stolen at the first opportunity.

I could feel my adrenalin start to pump, as I started to shake inside. I was becoming very angry, but controlled myself. In a whisper, I said to Mavis, 'I can't stand this, I'm going to leave.' However, I did not, instead I raised my voice and informed the group that this motion had already been proposed. Others agreed with me and the motion was recorded in Mavis's favour.

After reflecting, I questioned myself about my actions. I realize that I acted in a maternal way, the way I would have if it was one of my children involved. I do not know if this is good or bad, as it seems more emotional than professional.

Whether Mavis needed to be championed by Judy is not clear. However there is evidence in Mavis' journal that by Week five she was more outspoken. She had discovered the power of knowing how formal committees should be run and insisted that procedure be followed.

Mavis Week 5

I am starting to feel more confident at speaking during the meetings and have even called points of order. At this meeting I called a point of order as the Chairperson had moved for one member to silently read the previous weeks minutes (to save time). I didn't think this was fair as we all did not have a copy. It was encouraging to feel the support of other members on this point. The minutes were read aloud and it turned out that there were some discrepancies, so they had to be amended, before confirmation. Also, there was discussion on the topic. I brought the chairperson's attention to the fact that this same motion had been recorded at the second meeting... This incident reinforced what was said in a lecture about the difference one word can make in proposals.

Mavis' courage and her ability to speak out increased and by Week twelve she was unafraid to speak her mind.

Mavis Week 12

I felt good within myself when I suggested that halfway through the talk we could involve the audience... Others agreed. We made changes. I realized how much more confident I am now of having faith in the values of my opinions and ideas in comparison to the first few meetings when I was so scared.

The experience of addressing the forums was for many, a catalyst for reflection and self-change. Because of the nervousness that most students experienced when they walked to the front of the auditorium and looked back up at their many colleagues, all of whom were staring down with expectant looks on their faces, they tended to speak quickly and not invite general comment on their reports. Role expectations of public speaking are frightening and even though students may have been involved in tutorial group presentations throughout their studies, and even though many of them would have participated in general discussion within lectures, they had never before done anything like a forum presentation. It was hoped that the challenge of speaking in front of a large group of people would go some way towards preparing them for the day they would present their work to the general public.

An added pressure for each student who presented to the forum was linked to the knowledge that I had attended most of their meetings and therefore could verify what they were presenting. Even confident students discovered that, when they stood in front of an auditorium of over one hundred colleagues and faculty, they needed both courage and daring. Students with previous experience at public speaking found the task more difficult than they expected. Frank realized that confidence would build with more experience and he wanted to have another turn at it.

Frank Week 5

Standing in front of a full lecture theatre and talking is not as easy as it looks! I think the main reason why I was nervous was because the secretary had left the minutes of the meeting at home and I could not remember everything discussed at the meeting. My previous public speaking experience helped and I managed to stumble through it somehow, I'm sure that if I did it again I could redeem myself as I know what to expect and I would be better prepared. I think that speaking to a lecture theatre is the same as everything else - after you have done it once it gets easier as you know what is required of you.

For some students, like Claire, the reason for this lack of confidence in front of their colleagues was puzzling.

Claire Week 5

Forum. This was an unpleasant experience. I had to get up in front of the year and explain the proceedings of our first meeting to everyone. After 3

years of talking in front of my fellow students I feel that I shouldn't be nervous, but I always am.

Unfortunately, students who addressed the forums were not always greeted with support and encouragement from their colleagues. When Beth presented her report, some students seemed to ignore her but, on reflection, she did not believe her colleagues had intended insult. I believed that Beth had learned to move away from an emotional interpretation of what had occurred and adopted a more analytical position that enabled her to build confidence.

Beth Week 6

We had the forum today. I had to give a short talk because I was chairperson last week. The theatre seemed to have nearly all the year there. I was nervous about giving my little talk even though I had prepared it. This is nothing out of the ordinary as I always get nervous when talking in front of a large group. Whilst talking I realized the speed at which I was talking was a little fast so I tried to slow down. I also noticed that whilst I was talking not everyone was listening. I did not have everyone's full attention. I tried to make eye contact where possible and not read all from my piece of paper. I do not believe the lack of attention was anything to do with me personally, as I am sure that in every talk you'll get some people who don't listen.

As the weeks passed Norah worked to overcome her fears of public speaking and in Week ten, she found herself standing in front of the forum. She thought the experience was awful but endured it to support her chairperson who delivered the verbal presentation. As she stood there she realized that her avoidance of chairperson responsibilities had been a mistake, one that she decided she needed to work on.

Norah Week 10

This was a forum feedback meeting. Today was the day I (as secretary from last week's meeting) and the chairperson had to stand out the front. I was glad I didn't have to speak, but I got that twinge of annoyance inside, at the fact that I hadn't done it (the speaking that is). It made me feel slightly better when I noticed that the chair had written down notes to read off, and had obviously taken the time to compile her thoughts and how she was going to deliver them in speech. Some people (smart alics) simply rattle off the latest happenings from the top of their head - it seems. I'm going to have to learn how to do this. I think the secret is just to be casual about the whole deal - perhaps I worry about what everyone else is thinking too much. A definite character flaw.

On the day of the presentation Norah had taken up a presenter responsibility and had learned to deliver information with ease. In fact, she actually enjoyed her public speaking role on the day.

Norah Week 13

Everything went to plan and the audience seemed to be intent on the information we were providing. It was fun being out the front, being the

lecturer and educating others. After our presentation morning tea was served and following this I had to go out the front of the building and direct people.

Fanny, who had originally believed that she was too slow to compete effectively to be elected to chair a meeting, accepted nomination in Week ten as one of the main student presenters for their community project. While this was daunting, she was bravely determined to do well.

Fanny Week 10

I found out that Dorothy and myself have been allocated the task of actually presenting. This is one aspect which I did not give much thought to. I assumed that others in the committee would jump at the chance to do the presenting. I don't really know how I feel about this, as it is something I have never done before. If anything I am already nervous!

Later, during the semester break:

The nerves have finally registered. It has finally hit home that I am presenting... It didn't really hit either of us until today, when we were working out what we were going to say and do. I will just have to look at it as a learning experience rather than a torture test!

Other students were also determined to avoid the public speaking aspect of the simulation. Dinah tried to circumvent speaking at the forums by avoiding the chairperson role. She thought that being secretary would be less difficult task even though it was still daunting. The experience was a positive one and, like Norah, she found herself accepting a public speaking responsibility for the community presentation.

Dinah Week 7

Initially the thought of being on the management team was quite daunting. However after a few weeks of 'I can do it' I volunteered myself. As secretary, it was my duty to be the scribe of the meeting. After much thought I decided that it wasn't going to be that hard - after all, the chairperson had the speaking role and the responsibilities to maintain control. Well, little did I know to my amazement I was greatly challenged as secretary. It was a struggle to concentrate and to focus, especially when there were different points being raised and different person talking simultaneously. However I did enjoy my experience in the management team and will definitely appreciate future teams.

In today's meeting I was elected to be the spokesperson for the presentation. I am happy with the appointment and am confident that I can fulfil the role, although I am not quite sure what my role definition is at the moment. I am sure that as we become organized as one 'big team' and as we draw closer to the presenting date - my role will be more defined and fall into place

As secretary for the previous week's meeting, Dinah found that she was expected to accompany the chairperson to the front of the forum and assist with the presentation. Her description below of the fear that she experienced just by standing next to Fran, is

an indication of the intensity of feeling that many students commented upon. On reflection Dinah thought that the experience could have been avoided.

Dinah Week 8 Forum

With the realization of having to present a report to the forum today my stomach sank. I was quite nervous I didn't understand why I was feeling that way because as chairperson, Kay had the responsibility to deliver the 'verbal report'. As Tracey called our group Kay and I moved to the front of the forum and while Kay was giving the report, I realized that the fact that I was doing nothing was making me nervous. I had approximately a hundred pairs of eyes focussing in my direction yet I was 'dumb founded' - blank. I felt nervous, useless and extremely uncomfortable.

Looking back, I feel that it wasn't necessary for me to be standing and doing nothing. I had written up the minutes and highlighted the points that needed to be announced, if Kay had wanted something clarified, I could have supported her just as well from my seat.

Some students began to make observations about courage and daring towards the end of the simulation when the enormity of what they were working on was realised. In Week ten Amy was nervous about the project but held firm in her belief that she and her group would succeed.

Amy Week 10

During this week I've been thinking about this project and telling my family about it and the scope of what we're doing literally 'hit me'. It has become pretty huge. I'm nervous about it going well but still don't have any doubts that we can pull it off. I figure just to get it organized is no mean feat and that is well on the way this week.

Following the project presentation she believed that they could take on 'anything thrown their way' and described the pride she felt in her group.

Amy Week 13

After today I think we could tackle just about anything thrown our way. The day went off without a single hitch. Staff, and the audience alike were suitably impressed by the presentation. I think we even impressed ourselves a great deal, I know I did. I finished the day marvelling at how something that we as students could do would turn out so professionally. The day and all the hard work that went into the preparation for it was completely worthwhile as all that it is - an assignment, an experience, an education (in more than one way), and a memory. I think the whole day was worthwhile and I, myself, feel more worthwhile having done it, and contributed to the education of the community.

Discussion

When the simulation began, few students were unaffected by the new learning environment in which they knew they would have to learn new skills and to be brave

enough to speak up and insist on acknowledgement of their work. Many discovered that building and strengthening personal capacity in order to deal with such an environment was both novel and difficult to accomplish. The obvious personal challenges of having to work within the foreign culture of formal meetings were magnified through having to assert themselves within a group of competitive colleagues.

The simulation-based learning experience was for many students, quite intense however it is not possible to claim that the many personal transformations described by students throughout their journals can be attributed entirely to their experiences in this undergraduate subject alone. A few students commented on the changes that they had noticed in themselves throughout their time at university while many others actually attributed their increased capacity for taking up leadership responsibilities and for dealing with life in general, to this learning experience. Whatever the case may be, there is no doubt that the simulation environment acted as a catalyst for most of the students in terms of promoting critical reflection and recognition of personal growth and change.

Initial reactions to the learning experience included some students retreating from the challenge and reaffirming their friendship networks and supply of emotional support which, in a few cases progressed to an expectation of support from friends during committee business. Other students panicked when they discovered that they had been separated from their friends and expressed dread at having to face the challenge 'alone'. The initial level of uncertainty and feelings of inadequacy for a few of these final year students like Judy, extended to wondering if they should even be at university. But by the end of the semester very few had not reached a level of comfort about being able to manage unfamiliar situations.

The processes of personal transformation or self-change that occurred for most students was fascinating to observe. From very insecure positions such as described above, students who lacked confidence in the value of their ideas like Wanda, and those worried by having to learn about meetings and speaking up, like Dinah, Irene, Judy, Leonie and Winifred, all learned different ways to overcome their concerns and develop positive ways of responding to new challenges.

Experiences in public speaking helped students like Estelle to overcome nervousness whereas other students like Holly, Angela and Annie grew to appreciate self-discipline, mutual respect and order. Dinah and others like her build personal resilience by

separating personal and emotional relationships from work or professional relationships. Allan believed he had become more analytical and more articulate and most, like Holly, could see that they were evolving into professionals.

Part of the process of personal development is being able to find a way forward when one is in a difficult situation. Students who embraced these processes looked for solutions by observing faculty and others who modelled competence. For instance, Bert was inspired by a guest speaker to try new roles and to adopt a more questioning approach to what he observed happening around him. Usually shy students also observed their colleagues and others and eventually made their own attempts to take on leadership responsibilities or to participate in more effective ways. Other students found they had to overcome emotional responses linked to past experiences such as Lillian having to deal with blushing; and Don learning to be a lot quicker to respond during debates rather than quietly reacting to the unfairness of it all.

There is no doubt that the experiences students had as part of the simulation were often awkward and some students were quite frustrated or angry at times, about having to participate in the committees and projects. In many of the final journal entries students shared their views on what they thought were the benefits and shortcomings of this learning experience and many also commented on their anticipated entry into a nursing career.

Looking back over the experience I also appreciate the changes that occurred for me as a result of the simulation. Knowing that students in this subject were involved in a challenging and often uncomfortable learning experience made it necessary for me to commit to a level of engagement and connectedness with the students beyond that usually expected in the university environment. My responsibility was to closely monitor student progress and enable the sequencing of information and placement of critical moments in the program to promote student learning without disrupting the overall continuity of the learning environment. Consequently it was essential that I be aware of every student in terms of their experiences in the meetings and also their project work.

Close observation of student interactions also enabled me to identify any instances of group dynamics that could be described as falling outside acceptable limits of professional behaviour and where necessary, to take steps to prevent any serious outcomes from occurring. For example, while such instances were rare, from time to time there was evidence of discriminatory behaviour as well as some students claiming victimization in order to gain sympathy and extra assistance. My role in these situations

was to reinforce the codes and standards of professional nursing and encourage students to be personally responsible for their actions.

One of the more satisfying aspects of the experience was that students learned to critically consider and question anything I presented as theory or even a relationship which I claimed existed between the stresses generated by the simulation and those in the health industry. Throughout the learning experience students compared what was presented against their experiences on clinical practice placement and also within their social worlds. The relevance of the subject to the professional environments in which they hoped to practice was also examined and critiqued by many students.

In summary, the personal transformations that can be associated with learning to be a professional person are most easily related to socialization processes that occur in any professional education course. It is probable that the combination of anticipating being a graduate nurse and the intensity of the learning experience that captured students' attention from beginning to end, contributed significantly to the overall growth of professional attitudes and personal confidence among the students.

As it turns out, my early 1990s predictions and concerns about emerging nursing workforce problems were correct. While the simulation was set up and conducted as a way of preparing graduates to face a predicted onslaught of workforce pressures and to build resilience to enable them to engage with this turbulent work environment, it is difficult to say whether or not the confidence and skills developed by these students assisted them to deal with these 'real world' challenges. However it is clear from the student journals that most who experienced the critical education strategy approached the end of their university studies with increased confidence and optimism about their capacity to be leaders within their profession.

Chapter 8: Discussion and conclusions

Students involved in the simulation were nearing the end of their undergraduate degree in nursing and were anticipating the roles they would be required to take up following graduation. From the analysis of student journals and in particular their comments on experiences during clinical practice placements, the types of pressures I had set up in the simulation were similar to situations they had participated in or observed. It appears that students believed that the learning environment successfully mimicked the range and types of pressures that exist within the Australian health care system although not to the extent that actually occurs in the workplace or within professional organisations .

Within the simulation students experienced the type of professional autonomy expected of registered nurses to the extent that they were required to make choices about their goals and to decide how these might be pursued. From the journal evidence, the learning strategy assisted most students to move from a position of conservative compliance to one where they could independently assess situations and people as a basis for acting in a strategic way to press any agenda they may have. Having to meet responsibilities and to be accountable for their own performance in the team projects, acclimatized students to the political and professional environment. Many of the students claimed to have gained increased understanding of what is involved when working in the health industry, including learning to manage the activities of others and finding ways to endure criticism and personal attack from those who resent being managed.

Through their analysis of the political dimensions of people, situations and systems in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, students learned the political situational consequences of both winning and losing. Students gained a greater understanding of the personal burden that can occur for anyone undertaking a professional leadership role. The insights they shared on leadership issues create a detailed picture of the types of behaviours that they would expect from a credible leader as well as from themselves in leadership roles. For the majority of students the simulation was their first opportunity to take up formal leadership responsibility. Most found that they needed to consider how they had perceived leaders and leadership in the past and also, how they had been thinking about themselves in relation to being a leader.

The primary goal of the critical educational strategy was to promote the development of leadership skills and capacity among senior students so that they could learn to take responsibility for their own work and also to work within a team of equals. An

interesting discovery from the student journals related to who wanted to be the leader. In every simulation a pattern emerged with small numbers of men in the groups competing successfully to secure positional leadership, especially in the first six weeks of the simulation. They were strongly supported in their ambitions by many of the women in the group who thought that men were naturally best suited to leadership roles. Issues related to expectations of leadership behaviour also link with student perceptions of who should be the chairperson, with many expressing approval of behaviour that was loud, directive and masculine. It is entirely possible that because most of the initial leadership roles were taken by men, their portrayal of leadership behaviours may have set certain expectations for performance of leadership roles that others felt they needed to emulate.

Not all women in the groups supported gender-selection of leaders. Mention was made of leader attributes such as competence, generosity and equity as desirable and most of this group did not endorse the type of aggressiveness that was displayed by early leaders. Most students appreciated the courage and daring required of leaders and especially when a bid for leadership is contested.

As the students progressed through the simulation many reflected on leadership credibility although at first, not all wanted the responsibility of leadership. Students quickly learned to analyse leadership behaviour and judge different styles of meeting management as a basis for decisions about who warranted their political support. Students who did not want to take up formal leadership positions often considered the effect of their support in terms of how it would affect the distribution of power or influence held by colleagues and cliques within the group.

With the development of their own capacity for leadership, students became more discerning about supporting colleagues, especially when they were occasionally in competition with each other and also, if their colleague seemed 'less worthy' than someone else. Initially friends supported friends and for no other reason but friendship, however as their appreciation of professional interaction and codes of ethical behaviour increased, friendship seemed to diminish as a determining factor in formal committee business.

Overall, critical analysis by students of the situations in which they found themselves increased and, because of the leadership abilities gained through the simulation, many were able to take strategic action on the basis of their critical insights. Some students needed greater effort to develop leadership skills than others, especially those who

perceived themselves as being 'quiet' people. Their challenge was to learn how to articulate their ideas in ways that could not only be heard within the committees but also supported by their colleagues. For many the first step was to overcome a self-perception of being 'quiet' which had rendered them less able to speak up and participate. Many students monitored personal change as it was occurring and reflected in their journals on the process giving examples of bravery that ended in success, as well as bravery that did not lead to the achievement of particular goals. Regardless of the outcome of courageous efforts many of these brave, once-quiet people discovered that personal change was possible. The end result for most students was a building of capacity to take on leadership roles and responsibilities.

Evidence provided in the student journals creates a picture of what it is like to work within a team of competitive people holding strong views. From their experiences within committees where the competitive interests of individuals are counterbalanced against the overall interests of the team, it was interesting that many students expressed concerns about being confronted by their colleagues or friends regarding the work they were producing or their behaviour during meetings. Most students understood what was required of leaders and empathetic insights led to a general acceptance or tolerance of diversity in management and leadership styles.

The issue of whether quieter students should be protected from competition or not was something that many students considered in relation to its effect on team performance as well as individual achievement. Depending on the interpretation by others as to why some students did not participate, less outspoken students were regarded as either naturally timid and requiring protection, or that they were not interested enough to share their ideas in a way that could be acknowledged by the group.

In a few instances, some students believed that responsibility had been forced upon them and that subsequently they had been unfairly criticised by their colleagues for their poor performance. In most cases the groups brought pressure to bear on colleagues who were not performing as expected and I provided support to these students through consultation and guidance on what needed to occur and how they might approach the task or situation in question.

Group members were expected to develop expertise, contribute to teamwork, be accountable and demonstrate their commitment to the team and to the project. The political consequences of not living up to the team's expectations included having leadership roles removed by them or being overlooked in the allocation of work which

would have attracted assessment points as it would have been recorded in the committee minutes. Having established their systems of control over team members, groups tended to operate in ways that reinforced their image as a capable team, and which defended their own areas of responsibility. At the same time, similar contests occurred at the individual level.

From the evidence provided by students of the knowledge, skills and ability they developed in relation to becoming professional nurses who are capable of taking on leadership roles and responsibilities, the simulation-based pedagogy achieved its goals for the majority of students. That is, to help them develop the management, political and personal resources associated with leadership responsibilities that they will take up when they join the health workforce as registered nurses.

The benefits to students were generally reported in the journals as positive. Most derived enjoyment from the experience as they consolidated the skills and information accumulated throughout their previous years of study. The benefits to nursing are difficult to estimate. However if the levels of confidence and skill that students wrote about at the completion of the simulation are an indication, they would have joined the workforce equipped with a comprehensive understanding of the environment they are entering and therefore, be more able to respond to contemporary workforce pressures. In effect there would have been some strengthening of personal resilience prior to their entry into stressful workplace circumstances.

The focus of this research has been on the students' personal and professional development while at university. In itself the study was comprehensive and centred around the responses students made to the critical pedagogy as they experienced it. It was not possible, following graduation and their entry into the nursing workforce, for any continuation of the research to see if the skills and attributes they had gained as students actually translated into something useful as they engaged in their professional careers.

Far-reaching questions arising from this research lead me to hope for a future opportunity to test whether the information and skills gained as undergraduates were useful to these registered nurses once they entered paid employment. During the current nursing workforce crisis for example, it would be interesting to discover how many of the students whose views and reflections have been used in this study, remain involved with nursing. The difficulty in locating these ex-students would probably limit opportunities for further study and it is also possible that any who have left the nursing

profession would not be able to be contacted at all. While this would be a valuable exercise and is certainly considered for future research, the scope of the current study is already considerable and it would have been unrealistic to include this longitudinal aspect at this stage.

So what are we to make of all of this?

It is important that the reader understands that, despite reference to the literature on feminist and radical pedagogies as well as the strong social and professional views of writers on professional education, I had no real intention of shaping my teaching approach to fit within any of the frameworks presented. Rather, at the time I was trying to design this simulation-based teaching approach, my desire was to select from the various ideas and principles contained within the published literature, and construct a teaching tactic that was relevant to the contextual situation the students occupied in the university, and the context into which they would move following graduation. Consequently the question emerges as to whether the simulation-based learning that eventuated could be described as critical pedagogy, or whether it belongs within the more socially prescribed genre of professional education as described by Karr and Kemmis (1986); West (1997) and Karmel (1997). Now, having worked over many years with a critical pedagogy to assist students of a professional course of study, I am of the view that the simulation described here is in fact a critical pedagogy, a position discussed in greater depth later in this section. I have also found that students preparing to enter professional careers can benefit from the experience provided by the simulation, if they are prepared to grasp the less comfortable aspects of personal development. To do so requires courage and daring.

If the critical pedagogy concept as described by Luke and Gore (1992) is deconstructed to become a set of questions against which this research can be compared, it is clear that the teaching tactic that I employed in this instance was most certainly a critical pedagogy and some might even go so far as to describe it as a radical pedagogy. The tactic contains the credentials of critical pedagogy in that there is an acknowledgement of social and bureaucratic structures on individual development. Student perceptions were enhanced regarding equity and they accrued a desire for autonomy and the performance of worthwhile work for which they expected acknowledgement. Students also discovered ways to transact their own paths through the various contextual constraints on their learning and to define their own roles and the value of the work they were doing. Visions for social and professional change were

combined within this critical pedagogy and engaged learners in their own critique of both the visions for change and the pedagogy itself. In this way the pedagogy was both political and practical in that preconceptions about what students could or should do, and what nurses should or could be, were challenged and in some instances dissipated, allowing for new conceptualisations to occur.

Throughout the literature of the past few decades various perspectives on professional education have focused particularly on socially determined outcomes for particular professional groups (see for example, Watson 1988; Sachs 1990; Farmer et al 1992; Macdonald and Brooker 1995; Milligan 1995; Parker 1996) and also on critical pedagogy which appears to have been preoccupied with themes of social critique and liberatory progressivism (see for example, Smyth 1992; Yates 1994; Parkes 1997). Both streams of literature have raised doubts about the possibility, and indeed the wisdom, of combining instructional practice with radical approaches to emancipation or with curriculum geared to serving conservative social outcomes.

In determining the contribution of this study to the body of theory and research on critical pedagogy it may be useful to relate it to the conceptual areas common to poststructuralist literature. Most writers within this perspective express concerns about difference, scepticism about 'truth', and interest in contextual awareness. These core concerns were embraced throughout both the teaching and the research involved in this project however they may have been more implied than expounded in practice or discussed in relation to the literature in each pedagogical stream.

Writers on feminist pedagogy, such as Luke and Gore (1992), Gore (1993), Middleton (1993), Jipson (1995), Luke (1996) and Sikes (1997), claim that instructional practice can be successfully combined with feminist social vision and substantial endorsement is given to the Foucauldian approach to critical pedagogies. Support for such a view is offered by other writers from similar poststructuralist positions on pedagogy (see for example Giroux 1988; McLaren 1989; Gilbert and Taylor 1991) although their strong social vision has been criticized by Yates (1994) for a lack of reflexivity regarding the positions expounded. While tension abounds between these major literature streams as to the desirability of various approaches to critical pedagogy, the common elements that cross all streams have been helpful in establishing a framework within which this particular pedagogy can be located.

Most writers on the subject express concerns about difference arising from social controls and systems that can disempower certain people and empower others. The

types of struggles associated with difference and contests for control of theory and pedagogical practice can be found in, for example, the writings of Grundy (1984), O'Brien (1987), Gore (1992), Aronowitz and Giroux (1993), Kincheloe (1993), Kanpol (1994), Walcott (1994), Purpel (1995), Appel (1996), McLellan (1996) and Courts (1997). Difference can arise from professional practice systems as well as social controls and, in the case of nursing and the changes that have occurred throughout the past century to this profession, the politics of difference have influenced nursing's progress toward establishing a strong social appreciation of its professional and industrial identity. It was precisely my own understanding of the effects of systematic enforcement of conformity in nursing through socialization processes that motivated the setting up of this critical pedagogy in the hope that students would at least understand the pressures being brought to bear on them as new graduates, and possibly to identify the hegemony associated with such efforts.

Throughout the literature on critical and feminist pedagogies there is an underlying scepticism about established order and questions about what is regarded as 'truth'. Empowerment is one such concept and while it is generally endorsed in the literature as a pathway to emancipation and liberation (see for example Friere 1970; Giroux 1988; Bevis and Murray 1990; Aronowitz and Giroux 1993) it can also be seen as a threat to the freedom of those who would prefer not to 'be empowered' by others (Gore 1992). Much of the pedagogy from which this research has emerged involves issues of empowerment and attempts to promote a desire by students to take control of their learning situation and their professional environments.

Further concerns emerge from pedagogical literature as to the situation in which the pedagogy is occurring and the potential effect of the pedagogy on the learner, the teacher and the situation that the students may enter following the pedagogy (see for example Cain 1994; Robinson 1994). Contextual elements were considered in depth during this teaching and research and attempts were made throughout the critical pedagogy to ensure that contextual awareness by students about power and inequalities were balanced against the pragmatic requirements of learning to be nurses who would satisfy regulatory requirements and who could function as professionals within circumstances specific to nursing and the health industry. Concerns as to how students, who emerged from their studies with confident in their political skills and insights, would fare in the workplace were central to the teaching tactic. These concerns were discussed with the students during the simulation and as a result, most students acknowledged their fears that the nursing profession and the health industry

were probably more comfortable with new graduates who were less politically aware and less articulate than they had become.

The strength of this research is that it confronts the thorny and often avoided realization that critical pedagogy may not be practical in the real-world environment of teaching. While critical and radical pedagogy writers espouse political dissonance and lament the silencing of critical voices, very few writers link the theory and core concerns of critical and radical pedagogy to instructional practice (see for instance, Simon 1987; Kanpol 1992; Day 1993; Razack 1993; Gannaway 1994; McEwan and Egan 1995; Buckingham 1996; Biley and Whale 1996; Deevers 1997).

The few researchers who have written about their instructional experiences in critical pedagogy refer to isolated aspects of lessons or approaches to certain parts of prescribed curriculum content. The impression gained from the literature is that critical pedagogy is less practical than it is philosophically appealing. That having been said, it is possible that other teachers have implemented the principles of critical pedagogy but have not published their experiences.

Conceptions of divisions within the various approaches to instructional practice become less useful when a practitioner of teaching begins looking for ways to set up a pedagogy that will engage students in learning and also satisfy the requirements of the social system that supports the learning environment. The pedagogy discussed here was built around practice rather than any formal theory. The practice of teaching within the simulation called upon a tough-minded optimism that held students and others to their responsibilities while at the same time recognising their freedom to participate or not, and to devise their own interpretations and responses to all that occurred.

The delineations between critical, radical and professional pedagogies have been dismantled, or at least diffused, by this research and this is perhaps the most important contribution it makes to the literature. Undergraduate students of professional nursing were offered this simulation-based critical pedagogy which ran for fourteen weeks and formed a significant part of the semester's work in that it accounted for one of four concurrent senior year subjects in an undergraduate degree. It had solid links to a context of practical concern to students while also taking a political position that affected both students and faculty on campus and, potentially, an effect on the professional and industrial environments into which the students would graduate.

As part of this pedagogy, the types of dissonance discussed at length by critical pedagogy writers were not just examined, deconstructed and analysed within the

simulation, they were actually experienced by the students and teachers who then reflected upon their responses as a way of further developing critical intellectual skills. In effect, the strength of the research reported here is that the principles of critical pedagogy were applied to a learning situation to promote the development of skills and attitudes in critique that can equip graduates to alter the balance of power in the health industry, if that is what they choose.

Already both applause and criticism has been expressed by those who are aware of the pedagogy that I employed. Both types of feedback seem to spring from perceptions about the role and responsibilities of teachers, the preparation of nurses to serve socially prescribed roles, the wisdom of encouraging critique of established order in both the education and health industries and, the moral responsibility associated with endorsing autonomy for people who will probably seek employment in a hierarchical profession that values compliance and discourages individualism.

A major difference between this research and the approach taken by many academic writers on critical, feminist and radical pedagogy is that this research is embedded within practice rather than simply an attempt to provide an intellectual critique of particular fields of academic writing. Even so, the critique provided throughout the thesis weaves a theoretical background against which the practice can be viewed. Developed more for its implementation than for pedagogical research, the simulation-based learning experience was modified in various ways as it unfolded, in order to provide students with a stimulating yet relatively safe learning environment.

An attempt has been made in this thesis to share with the reader the forces that helped to shape my own values and explain my choices. Many of the decisions taken to modify the simulation were based on my own philosophy which centralises personal freedom and the inescapable responsibility to myself and other that that entails, as well as drawing upon my perspectives concerning the health industry. Constraints operating on the simulation were similar to those constraining the world of work into which students graduate, therefore a critical rationale of the pedagogy was to dispel the impossible fiction that the health industry is a fully resourced, harmonious and equitable workplace.

It is clear from the preceding chapters that the simulation-based pedagogy was sometimes less inclusive and enjoyable than the usual learning experiences associated with professional education. There has been no attempt in this work to undertake a micro-inspection of pedagogy however the sources of guidance that helped me to

implement the simulation in a way that acknowledged the broader historical, cultural and political contexts of professional education have been openly shared with the reader.

By implementing the principles of critical pedagogy and thereby uncovering the many practical, philosophical and social problems associated with it, this research moves the focus of debate from theory to practice. The pedagogical debates that have occurred will now need to move to the next level where the outcomes of critical pedagogy practice can be scrutinised. Further analysis is warranted of the combined pedagogical frameworks and types of simulation that I attempted in this pedagogy and perhaps others may attempt a pedagogical approach similar to that described here. While this simulation was applied within a nursing studies program, there is no real reason preventing its gainful application within other professional education courses. It is my hope that other teachers will be heartened by the knowledge that some of the grand ideas and values of critical pedagogy can be applied to the real-world of teaching practice.

In suggesting that other teachers take up the challenge of implementing a critical pedagogy I do not wish to imply that other approaches to teaching are deficient in any way. Rather, I believe that pedagogical writers and practitioners now need to move on from conjecture about what might be possible through critical pedagogy and accept that it can be done. The way is now open for practitioners of teaching to take control of this pedagogy and apply it to their instructional practice in ways that can stimulate everyone involved to learn about themselves and their environments.

Appendices

Appendix A: Setting up the NURS325 subject and simulation

Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing program were required, during their final year of study, to take Community Development Nursing as a subject.

The purpose of meetings were outlined under the terms of reference which could be devised prior to setting up the committee, or be part of the work that committees undertook in the initial phase of their existence. In this simulation of formal committees the terms of reference were set broadly and students were required to refine them and where necessary, establish terms of reference for specific subcommittees so that role clarity and appropriate work distribution could be established.

Information provided to students at the commencement of semester and from time to time throughout the lecture program, was designed to assist them to understand committee structures and the roles and responsibilities of those managing the meetings as well as those participating as members of the committee and subcommittees.

It was made clear to students that meeting management requires meetings to be held in a way that encourages the pooling of ideas and sharing of information that can advance the business of the meeting outlined in the agenda. If this is managed well by the chairperson and those participating, committee members will have an opportunity to build confidence along with a willingness to commit their energy to the team's goals. During meetings the management team, the chairperson and the secretary, may need to urge members to make decisions and to be accountable for progress however this will need to be balanced with the need for social interaction and peer support. Meeting managers who indulge in excessive talking, inhibitive discussion, offering opinions of a personal nature or leading the group into discussion on side issues, is as destructive to functional committee processes as is rushing the meeting so fast that the members are unable to fully participate in the debate and decision making work.

From the outset of the simulation, students were made aware that each tutorial group would be required to form a committee that would plan, develop and manage a community development program. While the exact functions of the committee were left for students to devise, examples of other similar committee structures were provided. For example, some committees set up working groups of subcommittees to identify,

research, plan, implement and evaluate the program dealing with particular topics, and these groups report back to the main committee on progress.

As the time period available for this project was around six to eight weeks there would be a weekly meeting of the main committee and students could decide what other meetings they needed to achieve the project aims. Because some groups were required to complete their work within six weeks, followed by a two-week break and then present their work to the community, it was important that students realized the responsibility and accountability that accompanied committee roles and team effort.

Most students at some point in their journals commented upon the roles that they were to take up in the running of formal committees and the work associated with subcommittees to the project. The simulation was designed to prompt students to critically analyse bureaucratic structures and also to reach an understanding of the responsibilities attached to leadership roles. As students were aware that extra participation marks were linked to the take up and competent performance of leadership positions of chairperson and secretary as well as that of subcommittee group leader, it was anticipated that they would form views on what behaviours and attributes made a 'good leader' and what did not. Competent performance by the chairperson and secretary in meeting management roles enabled other students to participate in ways that would recognise their contribution to the project and thereby attract participation marks as well. The simulation provided also an opportunity for students to think about their own attributes and behaviours in relation to leadership roles and responsibilities and, when they felt able, to take up those roles for themselves. In the first lecture the following broad instructions were provided as a guide to meeting management:

Meeting management

- (i) Before any meeting, the overall goals of the meeting must be decided.*
- (ii) The time and venue for the meeting is decided and announced ahead of time.*
- (iii) An agenda is prepared and only those matters on the agenda are discussed at the meeting. If a matter of urgency arises a suspension of standing orders can be called for. The agenda allows for general and other business to be introduced at the meeting at the time indicated on the agenda.*
- (iv) A chairperson is designated to implement the agenda and direct debate. The chairperson will also present a verbal account of the committee's progress at the forum following the meeting being chaired.*
- (v) A secretary is designated to keep a record of the meeting. Minutes of the meeting are written by the secretary and kept in the committee folder as a permanent record of the groups functioning and will be the basis for assessing student participation. If your work or contribution is not recorded in the minutes*

it will be difficult for you to claim that it happened or was discussed.

- (vi) *Meetings are held in tutorial times and need to be kept within the set time. (Usually 1 hour).*

Because of the persistent confusion surrounding the roles and responsibilities of committee members a further presentation of committee management responsibilities was provided for the students following the forum in week three on campus. The information on role expectations included the following, along with a general discussion around what can be done by committee members if these role expectations were not met:

The committee chairperson

The chairperson is elected each week to lead the committee and during their time as chairperson they are, in effect, the servants of the group. Chairpersons are responsible during meetings for keeping the focus of discussion on tasks, suggesting alternatives, protecting members from attack, encouraging participation, working towards allowing everyone to win, and coordinating paperwork associated with setting up and recording the meeting. Some suggestions for chairpersons during meetings:

- 1. control the garrulous members*
- 2. draw out the less outspoken members*
- 3. protect the weak from personal attack*
- 4. encourage reasoned debate on ideas*
- 5. avoid the suggestion-squashing reflex*
- 6. recognise the most senior or confident people last*
- 7. close the meeting on a note of achievement.*

The committee secretary

The secretary is elected each week to accurately record the business of the committee and manage the logistics of the meetings. This person deals with the communication aspects of the committee and works closely with the chairperson to ensure the smooth running of the group. Minutes of the meeting are written and checked with the chairperson prior to distribution to members (via the communication board). The secretary assists the chairperson to prepare for the verbal presentation at the following week's forum.

Subcommittee leaders

The leader and minutes secretary form the permanent management team of subcommittees and provide feedback to the main committee on progress and problems experienced since last meeting. The full committee then has the option of discussing these problems and providing advice, or delegating matters back to subcommittee if they wish. The subcommittees keep records of meetings through minutes or action sheets (which show the date, those present, the item or problem, and the action proposed or taken and by whom). These records also will be used to assess student participation in the subject.

Committee members

The primary aim of committees is to achieve consensus, a condition in which each member accepts the group's decision and supports it. Some guidelines for member participation:

- (i) State your position clearly and logically, but do not argue.*
- (ii) Listen to and take note of other member's reactions to what you propose.*
- (iii) Search for equitable resolutions to issues that seem stalled in debate*
- (iv) Do not yield on a point for the sake of harmony or friendship. Only accept a proposal if it is based on sound, supported judgement.*
- (v) Avoid techniques that bypass reasoned debate or sound judgement (such as voting, coin flipping or averaging)*
- (vi) Encourage differences of opinion. A wide range of opinions provides an opportunity for more information and better solutions.*
- (vii) If issues arise regarding the committee or project deal with them within the committee*

For some students this information was welcomed because they had missed the initial introduction during week one. Students were referred also to various sources of information on meeting management such as Renton's Guide for Meetings and Organisations ¹ and any other resources they might discover in the library.

Appendix B: Subject NURS325 assessment system

Rationale for community development nursing subject

The health and health care needs of many societies are changing rapidly, secondary to twentieth century ways and patterns of living. Traditional medical approaches to health care are being questioned and reviewed, particularly in terms of cost effectiveness. It is anticipated that by 2000 AD the average length of hospital stay will be two days or less and the responsibility for health and treatment will be taken up by individuals themselves, or their families. Health promotion and health education is the means by which this extensive re-definition of responsibility will occur. The efficacy of health promotion and teaching has been vindicated in numerous interventionist research trials, which have improved the lifestyle behaviours and health beliefs of individuals and communities.

This subject will concentrate on the examination of nursing theory as it applies to the nursing care and education for independence of people in non-institutional settings. It recognises that nursing practice within the community epitomizes primary nursing in its most independent form. Students will examine the broader scope of nursing practice away from highly controlled institutional situations and will build upon the basic nursing and health concepts and skills learned in previous subjects.

Community development nursing emphasises the perspective of nurses as independent practitioners and requires students to transfer accumulated nursing modalities and knowledge from disparate sources, to achieve a higher level of operations - that of analysis, synthesis and independent professional judgement. Exposure to these concepts of nursing practice falls during the last session of the course and will provide them with the opportunity to re-evaluate all that they have learned in terms of the practicalities of actual nursing practice. Community based nursing development services are a growing source of nursing employment and this subject will prepare graduates to take advantage of these opportunities as well as preparing for the possibility of private practice.

Traditionally, the nursing role has incorporated health promotion and teaching, and has generally been focussed towards individual patients, clients and their significant others, as well as student nurses, nurses and to a lesser extent, other health workers. There is a need to expand and extend this nursing role to meet the needs of the broader community, and to facilitate the continuing learning needs and development of other nurses and health care professionals. Hence knowledge of the principles and application strategies of health promotion, teaching and learning, is an essential part of the therapeutic armoury of the contemporary nurse.

Subject assessment information

The assessment for this subject consists of one major project comprising three sub-tasks. There will be 25% overall allocated to a group mark and the remaining 75% will be based on assessment of individual achievement.

Community Development Project: 25% (Group mark)

Each tutorial group will work as a committee to assess, plan, implement and evaluate a community development event in a community organisation. Formal committee structures and procedures will be followed and subcommittees established to perform the required aspects of the project.

The final event will occur during Week 14 of session, in the venue nominated, and the event will be assessed jointly by lecturers and community representatives. All students in the tutorial group must be present and in full uniform for the presentation of their project.

Reflective Journal: 40%

Each student will make reflective notes on the functioning of the committee and the progress of the project noting particularly the functional aspects of committee and group processes, and the dynamics involved in working with the general community on a community development project. Journals will be assessed on the clarity of expressed thought and the depth of insight gained through reflective analysis of these processes. (See criteria below)

Tutorial activity: 35%

The committee work of each tutorial group will be minuted along with activity records for each sub-committee. These records and the community development project proposal will be submitted for assessment of individuals within each group.

Evidence of individual participation in the project will be determined through scrutiny of the attendance and contribution record; agenda item presentation and motions proposed and seconded.

The responsibility for chairing the committees and recording the minutes for each meeting will rotate to different students each week. Each tutorial group will attend a feedback forum each Monday at 10.30 am where the previous week's chair and secretary from each group will present a progress report to the assembly. These reports must be at least 8 minutes duration.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Initial liaison has occurred with the local retirement villages and they are very keen to participate in this quite innovative program of study. They perceive this as an opportunity to both assist senior university students to have a valuable learning experience, and to derive tangible benefits for their retirees in experiencing a health promotional activity designed and presented especially for them.

The reputation of both the nursing profession and the university is in your hands on this project and I have confidence that you will be able to satisfy this responsibility as you near the completion of your Bachelor of Nursing degree.

Assessment Criteria - Reflective Journal

Marks: 40% of subject

VARIABLES

Students were provided with handbooks containing the information given below as well as several detailed explanations as to how the journals would be assessed. They were asked to restrict their reflection entries to the experiences they had in the simulation and were invited to discuss their own individual journals with me during the simulation if they felt it necessary. Students were assured that the content of their journals would not be assessed, but rather on adherence to the presentation criteria for the journal and on the clarity of thought and expression, their level of intellectual analysis of matters raised depth of insight on these matters. Weightings were allocated to higher levels of intellectual analysis and critical reflection.

For example, if a journal contained 60% of routine thinking and technical reflection then the marks would attract a weighting of 20% in each case. If within the journal around 20% indicated logical reasoning and clarification of issues then the available weighting on 20% of the total would be 50%. If the journal contained around 20% of entries that demonstrated integration of information and analysis of responses as a prelude for action, then these would attract 100% weighting for that 20% of the journal.

PRESENTATION: (5 marks)

Journals must be hand written neatly and legibly in a 64-page school exercise book (*no larger than A4 size*)

CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION: (10 marks)

- Identification of issues and contextual framing (2 marks)
- Critical scrutiny of issues (3 marks)
- Generation of personal goals and strategic actions (5 marks)

LEVEL OF INTELLECTUAL OPERATION: (10 marks)

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| % of routine thinking (<i>ie. limited by tradition or authority</i>) | (20% weighting) |
| % of rational thinking (<i>ie. logical and sequential reasoning</i>) | (50% weighting) |
| % of Intuitive thinking (<i>ie. integration and synthesis leading to action</i>) | (100% weighting) |

DEPTH OF INSIGHT (15 marks)

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| % of technical reflection. This indicates a low level of reflection.
(<i>ie. application of existing knowledge to achieve goals</i>) | (20% weighting) |
| % of practical reflection. This indicates a medium level of reflection.
(<i>ie. clarifying the assumptions underpinning judgements and activities</i>) | (50% weighting) |
| % of critical reflection. This indicates a high level of reflection
(<i>ie. analysis of situations, articulation of conditions that frustrate or constrain self understanding; suggestion of emancipatory actions</i>) | (100% weighting) |

Total marks =
40

Grade: HD D C P F

Assessment Criteria - Tutorial Work

Marks: 35% of subject

The purpose of this unusual approach to tutorial learning is to provide you with the opportunity to experience leadership roles and observe the dynamics of group interaction under a situation of formal meeting procedures and project management. Survival in the health industry is frequently dependent upon one's ability to organize and innovate as well as to cooperate and compromise with people holding divergent views.

It is hoped that within the seven weeks available for your committee to develop this health promotional project, you will have mastered the formal procedures in participating and leading a project team and presenting the final product to the broader community. It would therefore be to your advantage to read up on formal committee procedures so that you can ensure that you compete effectively for your share of the available marks for this section of the assessment.

VARIABLES

The minutes of the meetings held by your committee and sub-committees will be submitted in a folder (supplied by Tracey McDonald) at the end of Week 14. The contents of this folder will be scrutinized and marks allocated according to the performance of each committee member as reflected in the official minutes. These marks will be weighted according to the level of effort and/or courage entailed in the particular contribution made by each person.

The final grading will be calculated as a proportion of 35% which is the maximum allowable for this piece of assessment. In other words, the person most visible in the records (minutes) for a particular group will be allocated the full 35% and all other students from that group will be graded below that. It is therefore in your interest to avoid letting any one person do all of the work as they will get the 35% and you could get 2%...or less!! It is also in your interest to scrutinize the minutes each week to ensure that your contributions are mentioned.

Work that is not minuted cannot later be said to have occurred!! Scrutiny of the records will result in the following allocation of marks to establish the ranking of students in that group as described above:

Attendance at committee and sub-committee meetings	1
Non-attendance at general committee meeting	-1
Non-attendance with written apology received 24 hrs before meeting	no
penalty	
Member of management team (chair or secretary)	2
Leader of a sub-committee or task force	2
Member of a sub-committee or task force	1
Proposer of motions in committee meetings (Must speak 1-2 minutes on topic)	1
Seconder of motions in committee meetings (Must speak 1-2 minutes in support)	0.5
Mention of activity in action sheets or other record of sub-committee activities	1

These scores will be based on the records of your committee work and NOT on individual performance within the roles. It is up to the group to decide whether poor performance is to be minuted and thereby attract penalty points.

Assessment Criteria - Information Day Presentation

Group Mark: 25% of subject

In this subject, part of the task for final year students is to learn to engage with people in the community and to collaborate, negotiate and consult on the topic they will be researching and presenting. The students organize and sometimes fund their own presentations entirely and where they have pamphlets or samples to give away, students will have identified these resources and negotiated for them.

The time commitment for this aspect of the subject should reflect the proportion of the marks allocated ie. 25%. It is therefore not required that groups place unrealistic expectations on themselves in terms of producing plays, audio visuals or constructing huge displays etc. The group is required to determine an appropriate strategy for the target group and research the topic effectively and present it in a professional way.

Each of the groups is required to evaluate their own performance and they are expected to devise ways of measuring the effectiveness of their presentations. On the day of presentation, an assessment of the students' performance will also be carried out by lecturers and participants.

VARIABLES

The assessment criteria is listed below.

Score					
1. Was the program content relevant to the needs of the target group?					5
Not relevant	Somewhat irrelevant	Not sure	Mostly Relevant	Very relevant	
2. Was the program presented at an appropriate level for the target group?					5
Very Inappropriate	Somewhat inappropriate	Not sure	Mostly appropriate	Very appropriate	
3. Were the education messages clear and unambiguous? (displays, demonstrations and talks)					5
Confusing unclear	Somewhat	Not sure understandable	Mostly clear messages	Very	
4. Did the visual displays / handouts support the presentation subject matter?					5
Not relevant irrelevant	Somewhat	Not sure	Relevant	Very relevant	
5. Were the presenters adequately prepared?					5
Unprofessional disorganized	Somewhat	Not sure	Adequate	Excellent	

Appendix C: NURS325 Subject objectives, content outline and schedule

Course objectives

At the completion of this subject, the student will be expected to be able to:

- discuss the need for health promotion and teaching in society and the implications for nursing, education and research;
- describe the role and functions of the nurse engaged in health promotion and teaching;
- analyse and discuss the principles and objectives of health promotion and teaching/learning within a model of nursing;
- identify factors that facilitate and inhibit the processes of health promotion and teaching/learning;
- discuss the concept of motivation as it applies to social learning within individuals, families and groups;
- explain the impact of social learning on behaviour and as a source of reinforcement;
- identify and describe health promotion and teaching/learning methods, skills, techniques or strategies that could be utilised by nurses in their domains;
- analyse the instructional process and recommend appropriate learning theories for given education circumstances;
- apply theories of teaching, learning and communication to situations involving individual, family, group and organisational participation to achieve health and/or therapeutic objectives;
- identify and describe the fundamental differences and similarities between institutional and non-institutional approaches to nursing practice;
- develop a personal philosophy of continuing professional growth and community development to achieve personal and community health;
- identify the effects of industry and unemployment on health and non-health behaviour patterns and relate these to the local and global context;
- explain the concept of transcultural nursing as it applies to community health nursing practice and apply these concepts to local and international situations;
- identify aspects of cultural groups which influence individual health, family health, community health and the provision of community-based health services;
- determine the current trends in ethno-specific service provision and discuss the advantages and disadvantages to the total community, of these influences;
- discuss the importance of promoting the nurse's self-development as well as the collaborative development of other health professionals, in the process of providing health promotion and teaching within society.

Content outline - Lectures

- Health and health care problems and criteria for wellness in society
- Knowledge base for community practice: application of information from epidemiology, demography, environmental studies and health reports
- Roles of community health nurses in primary care and as primary health carers

- Community practice and clients: lifestyle emphasis in independent practice; clients at various life stages
- The role of community health nurses in community development
- Community nursing for special populations - cultural and economic factors; rural practice; long-term rehabilitation; family support; substance abuse; school health; occupational health; aged care
- Entrepreneurial nursing practice
- Motivation for learning and learning patterns in society in relation to maintenance of health and well-being
- Educational and research implications for nursing
- Profile of nurses engaged in health promotion and teaching
- Health promotion and teaching/learning principles and objectives
- Barriers to health promotion and teaching/learning
- Factors enhancing health promotion and teaching/learning processes
- Teaching skills: program design and implementation in community practice
- Analysis of the instructional process
- Applied nursing methods, skills, techniques or strategies of utility in the provision of health promotion and teaching
- Nursing and collaborative self-development processes to facilitate continued commitment to health promotion and teaching roles.

Content outline - Forum topics

Topics were not necessarily covered in a set pattern and there was no real plan as to what debates emerged from the floor. Topics debated in forums following student presentation of their committee progress reports included:

- Principles of learning
- Networking to increase power base
- Politics and systems of control in nursing
- Journaling and reflection
- Would you employ yourself?
- Analysis of decision-making models
- Committee member roles and functions
- Group processes as applied to committee functions and meeting management
- Professional competence and professional responsibility
- Codes of ethical behaviour - ICAC frameworks for defining corrupt behaviour
- Communicating for impact
- Who really has the power?

Program schedules

Spring Session - Usual schedule of events

Week	On campus activity	Clinical practice	Community presentations
1	Lectures and Group work (four subjects)	Clinical subject 1 (Three weeks)	
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
Recess			
Recess			
11	Lectures and group work (four subjects)	Clinical subject 2 (Two weeks)	
12			
13			
14			NURS325
Study break			
Exams			
Exams			
Recess			

Autumn session - Usual schedule of events

Week	On campus activity	Clinical practice	Community presentations
1	Lectures and Group work (four subjects)		
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
Recess			
8		Clinical subject 1 (Two weeks)	
9			
10		Clinical subject 2 (Two weeks)	
11			
12		Clinical subject 3 (Two weeks)	
13			
14	Lectures etc (four subjects)		NURS325
Study break			
Exams			
Recess			

Committee Guidelines

Meetings and committees

One of the realities of nursing is seemingly endless meetings. Many nurses argue that they tie up a large group that could be doing the 'real' work of nursing which they see as being on a one-to-one level. Despite the unpopularity of meetings, they continue to be part of the nursing day in whatever the practice context and if not managed well, they can exaggerate management costs, reduce productivity and waste the nursing budget.

The purpose of meetings depends on the terms of reference set down at the beginning of the series. A committee can be set up to deal with a particular project; or to manage an ongoing situation; or to investigate an incident. The life of these committees therefore is limited by the terms of reference, which can either be set by the group or set by forces external to the committee.

Making meetings productive

Meeting management requires meeting to be assigned a purpose and be held in a climate that encourages the pooling of ideas and sharing of information. Members should receive intellectual stimulation and gain peer support as well as generating a feeling of confidence in the achievement of the goal. Those presiding over the meeting need to balance the pushing of members to make decisions and to be accountable for progress with the need for camaraderie. To do this, members must avoid excessive talking, inhibiting discussion, offering too many suggestions or leading the group away onto side issues, and rushing the meeting so fast that the process becomes dysfunctional.

In this subject each tutorial group will form a committee to manage a community development program. Possible functions of the committee include work parties to identify, research, plan, implement and evaluate the program dealing with particular health issues. The time period available for this project is six (6) weekly meetings followed by a 2-week break and then the presentation of the committees' work to the public. It is therefore crucial that the meetings be managed well and all members of the committee work diligently as a team.

The committee chairperson

The leader of the committee in effect becomes the servant of the group and acts to keep the focus of discussion tasks, suggesting alternatives, protecting members from attack, encouraging participation, working towards allowing everyone to win, and coordinating pre and post meeting paperwork. Some suggestions for leaders:

1. control the garrulous members
2. draw out the silent members
3. protect the weak members
4. encourage the clash of ideas within an environment of constructive tolerance
5. watch out for the suggestion-squashing reflex from yourself or others
6. come to the most senior or confident people last
7. close the meeting on a note of achievement.

The committee secretary

This person deals with the communication aspects of the committee and works closely with the chairperson to ensure the smooth running of the group.

Subcommittee leaders

The leader and minutes secretary form the representative of this group and feedback to the main committee on the progress and problems experienced since last meeting. The full committee then has the option of discussing the problems and providing advice, or delegating the matter back to the sub-committee if they wish. The sub-committees keep records of their meetings through minutes or action sheets (which show the date, those present, the item or problem, and the action proposed or taken and by whom.)

Committee members

The primary aim of committees is to achieve consensus, which is a condition in which each member accepts the group's decision and supports it. Some guidelines for members:

- State your position as clearly and logically as you can but do not argue. Listen to and ponder on other members' reactions to what you say.
- If discussion gets bogged down, search for a win-win resolution
- Do not yield on a point for the sake of harmony. Only accept a solution if it is based on sound, supported judgement.
- Avoid techniques that bypass sound judgement (such as voting, coin flipping or averaging)
- Encourage differences of opinion. A wide range of opinions provides an opportunity for more information and better solutions.

Meeting management

Before any meeting, the overall goals of the meeting must be decided.

The time and venue for the meeting is decided and announced ahead of time.

An agenda is prepared and only those matters on the agenda are discussed at the meeting unless there is a matter of urgency, which requires a suspension of standing orders.

A recorder is designated (in this instance, responsibility for keeping records will rotate around the members of the group). Minutes of the meeting are kept as a permanent record of the groups functioning. **IF IT IS NOT RECORDED YOU CANNOT CLAIM THAT IT HAPPENED OR WAS DISCUSSED.**

Keep the participation in discussion to representatives of the sub-committees so that only agenda items are discussed.

Meetings must be kept within the time limits set. Usually 1 hour.

Sample agenda

Agenda for meeting # (Title of Committee)

Project Group:

Held on (Date, time and place of Meeting)

1. Present
2. Apologies
3. Minutes from previous meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
 - 4.1 Issue #1 (M. Bloggs)
 - 4.1 Issue #2 (C. Thistlethwaite)
5. Correspondence in:
 - 5.1 Letter from Retirement Village Director
6. Correspondence out:
 - 6.1 Letter to Director of ### Village
7. Business arising from the correspondence
8. Reports from subcommittees
 - 8.1. Research subcommittee (A Johnson)
 - 8.2. Public relations subcommittee (R. Dwyer)
 - 8.3. Presentation and display subcommittee (J. Hogg)
 - 8.4. Resource management subcommittee (R. Hound)
 - 8.5. Evaluation subcommittee (p. Kirk)
9. Business arising from subcommittee reports
10. General business
11. Other business

Sample minutes:

Minutes of meeting #2 for (Title of Committee)

Project Group #3

Date and time of Meeting:

Chairperson: (Name)

Secretary: (Name)

Meeting opened at # pm

1. **Record of those present:** (Names and initials)
2. **Apologies:** (Names and initials)
3. **Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting**
(Moved: P.Ding, Seconded: D. Hing)
4. **Business arising from minutes**
(Notes made on decisions re agenda items)
5. **Correspondence in and out**
(Sender + short note on topics. File correspondence with minutes)
6. **Business arising from correspondence**
(Short notes on speakers and discussion. Record names of members who propose and second motions, and the result of any ballot eg. For 10 Against 4 Abstain 5 - carried)
7. **General business**
 - 7.1 Subcommittee reports: (Activity sheets submitted each week for files)
 - 7.1.1. Research subcommittee
 - 7.1.2. Public relations subcommittee
 - 7.1.3. Presentation and display subcommittee
 - 7.1.4. Resource management subcommittee
 - 7.1.5. Evaluation subcommittee
 - 7.2 Targets for next week (Record people involved and time for completion)
 - 7.3 Selection of chairperson and secretary for next meeting (Must be a different management team each week)
8. **Business without notice**
(Leave is to be sought at beginning of the meeting for items to be added to the agenda. The chairperson may decide to refuse the item and place it on the agenda for next meeting. Before extending the time allocated for the meeting, agreement must be sought from the sitting committee members. They may decide to hold a further extraordinary meeting to deal with the outstanding issues. If this decision is taken, the extraordinary meeting must also be recorded and reported on)
9. **Agenda for next meeting** (set by incoming management team)
There being no further business, the meeting closed at #.
Next meeting at #.

Sample activity sheets:

RESEARCH COMMITTEE COMMUNITY PROJECT

Meeting #3 Date:

Present:.....

.....

Apology.....

Item	Issue	Action	Person responsible	Review

Meeting closed Next meeting

Appendix D: Frequency Tables - Journal entries on thematic elements

Table 1. Journal entries on feeling lost and intimidated

Journal entries on Feeling lost and intimidated															
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Feeling overwhelmed	17	4	4	2	4	2	3			1					
Own behaviour	9	6	2	2	7	3	4	2		3	2	2		3	
Courage			1	1	1		3	8	5	4			2	3	
Group behaviour					1	2	2		1			2		3	
Reflections												1			

Table 2. Journal entries on the nature of competition

Journal entries on The Nature of competition															
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Opting out	1	2				1			1		1				
Enjoying game					2	1	2								
Hating the game	2		1	1	3	1	2								
Making opportunities	1	1	2	1		1	2	1							
Taking advantage	5				1		1	4	3	2				1	
Individual effort				1	1	4	1							1	
Team effort					3	6	4	4	1	1	2				
Concern for quiet ones	3	1			3	1	1		1				1		
Irritated by loud ones				1	1		1		1			1			
Feeling inadequate		2			1	3	1	3		1		1			
Feeling confident			1	1	2				1	2	1			2	
Ethics			1	1	1		1		1		1				

Table 3. Journal entries on team management

Journal entries on Team Management														
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Team building	5	3	3					1						
Own behaviour	3	2	1	5	2			6	4	3		3	2	
Meeting management			4				4				1	1		6
Team commitment			3			7								
Project management					4		3	6						

Table 4. Journal entries on leadership

Journal entries on Leadership														
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Natural leaders	1	1		1		1								1
Natural followers	2				1	3				1				
Learned leadership			1				1	2				1	1	1
Leadership competence	1		2	1		1		2			1			1
Perceived credibility		2	1			1			1					1
Leadership Integrity			1	1										
Tough decisions											1	1		
Courage and Resilience	1	2												
Plausibility of ideas	1	1								1				
Pursuit of excellence									1					
Sensitivity to others	1		3	1		1	2			1	1			

Table 5. Journal entries on setting up a committee

Journal entries on Committee set-up														
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Novel Experience	3													
Daring	2						1							
Following procedure	3			3	1									
Feeling overwhelmed	4													
Strategizing	1													
Irritation	4													
Collegial interaction	1				1		1					1		
Independence					1									

Table 6. Journal entries on power and politics

Journal entries on Power and Politics														
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Effect of rules	2	1		1	1	2	1	2	5			2	1	
Power base	1			1	3	2	1		2		1	1		
Power dynamics	5	2		4	12	2	1	2		1	1	1		
P-building strategies	4	1	5	2	2	4	3	1	2	3	1	1		2
Misuse of power			4		3	1	3	3		2	1		1	

Table 7. Journal entries on role expectations

Journal entries on Role Expectations														
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Intrinsic rewards	3				1		2			1	1			
Role definition	2	2	2		13	1		2						
Specific roles			1				1	1		1		1		
Negotiation				3	1		1	1		1				
Performance				1		11	9	2	3	4		1		

Table 8. Journal entries on critical incidents - personal

Journal entries on Critical Incidents - Personal														
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Challenged	1			2	6	7	4	4	2	3	1		4	1
Inspired	1					1					1			1
Stimulated	1				1	1								
Motivated	1					3				1		1		
Courage and Daring				1	2	2	1	2		2	2			
Reflection			1				2			1	1			
Insight		1	1	3	2	5	2						1	5
Personal growth					2		1		3	1	1	3		
Achievement				1		1			1				3	1

Table 9. Journal entries on critical incidents - group

Journal entries on Critical incidents - Group														
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Challenged		1	1		2		1			1				
Stimulated					2									
Motivated					1		3					1		
Courage and Daring					3		1							
Reflection				1	3	1	1							
Insight	1				2	1	1						1	1
Personal growth														1
Achievement					1	1	8							

Table 10. Journal entries on relationships

Journal entries on Relationships															
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Animosity	1	1			2	1									
Hostility					4	1	2								
Enmity			1			2	1			1	2				
Bitterness					1		1								
Antagonism			1	1	1	1	1								
Alienation	2	1				1	2				1				
Friendliness	4	1		2	1	1	2		1	4	1			5	
Concern	2			1	1	1		1		1	1				
Support	1						1		3	1			1		
Collaboration	3		1	1		1				2				1	
Competitor	2					1								1	
Cohort					2			1				1		1	

Table 11. Journal entries on the effect of the learning experience

Journal entries on the effect of the learning experience															
WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Socio-political awareness				1	2	1		1	1	1		1		8	
Self-awareness	2			2	2	1				1		2		9	
Leadership critique				1	1			3		1			1	3	
Leadership potential													1	3	
Professional interaction				1				1		2			3	7	
Individual roles in teams			1			2		1		1			1	3	
Leadership skills									1			1		8	
Well-prepared for career										1	1	2		12	

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